The Animate Image
Subjectivity and Objectivity in Spanish Avant-Garde Texts on the Cinema (1923–1931)

by

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my dad, Tom McAdams, who reminds me to be myself and enjoy my life.

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Abstract

This dissertation examines texts from the Spanish avant-garde (1923–1931) that present the advent of cinema as a force that alters the fundamental distinction between subjects and objects. I analyze a selection of avant-garde literary and theoretical texts to demonstrate the presence of a persistent leitmotiv throughout the art of this period: the idea that the mode of vision employed in film-watching is one that makes no distinction between surface and depth, between what actually experiences thought and emotion and what merely has the appearance of doing so. The texts explored over the course of this dissertation identify the cinematic spectator's instinctive understanding of the film image as an animate being; they depict the spectator relating to the human figure onscreen as though it were the real person it copies rather than an inert reproduction. As I demonstrate, these texts posit a connection between this mode of perceiving the film image and the dissolution of the notion of a significant difference between subjects and objects, or entities with and without inner worlds. They suggest that the movie screen is an arena in which reality consists solely of what can be perceived by the eyes, thus situating images and real people in a relationship of equivalence.

My first chapter analyzes Salvador Dalí's essays on photography and film during the late 1920s, which exalt the camera as a source of objectivity and "neutral vision": a mode of seeing that circumvents the subjectivist hierarchies of regular life in order to lessen the power of human beings and increase that of objects. In Chapter Two, I employ close-readings of Francisco Ayala's short stories of 1927–1930 to show that Ayala consistently presents the technique of

close-up as a dehumanizing force that converts the filmed person into an object-like amalgamation of independent parts. Chapter Three focuses on Pedro Salinas's poetry and short stories of 1924–1931, in which the theme of the double that usurps the original recurs frequently in connection with technologies such as film that substitute "electronic presence" for real presence. My fourth chapter centers on Ramón Gómez de la Serna's 1923 novel *Cinelandia*, a parody of Hollywood that, I argue, depicts cinema as following the logic of physiognomy: the pseudoscience of character whose founding belief is the idea that man lacks a distinction between appearance and essence. In my final chapter, I connect José Ortega y Gasset's 1924 essay "La deshumanización del arte," which advocates for art that places human beings and objects on the same plane by attending only to their visible surfaces, to the cinematic dissolve as it is employed in films like Dalí and Luis Buñuel's *Un chien andalou* (1929).

The artists whose work I examine exhibit conflicting attitudes toward the effects of the film image: some celebrate cinema as a vehicle for dismantling the traditional subject-object hierarchy, while others express anxiety about its consequences for interpersonal relationships. However, they are united by their adherence to the idea that film weakens or nullifies the essential distinction between the human and the nonhuman. By identifying these artists' suggestion that film engenders a new way of relating to one's surroundings that extends beyond the walls of the movie theater, this project speaks to the fundamental transformation of perception and reality that was wrought by the arrival of cinema.

Introduction

The radical innovation of film is that it appeared to duplicate rather than depict reality. As Richard Abel observes, the cinema's "reproduction of movement gave the illusion of life or reality as no other spectacle did" ("Before the Canon" 14). For the spectator in the early decades of cinema, the movie reel seemed miraculous and utterly unprecedented in its ability to bring to the screen human beings themselves, who walked, danced and made facial expressions with a fluidity that was undeniably lifelike. In 1920s Spain, as the country belatedly and rapidly entered into capitalist modernity, this introduction to the miracle of film was all the more intense. The period of artistic production constituting the Spanish avant-garde (roughly 1918–1931) is accordingly replete with depictions of the experience of film-watching, as well as essays and articles theorizing the art of film and describing (whether speculatively or from experience) the position of the filmmaker. This dissertation examines a selection of those texts, identifying the common themes that unite them and the opposing attitudes that separate them. The texts collected in this study share an understanding of the film image as reality itself, as the being or thing captured by the camera rather than a mere portrait of that entity. For the authors of these texts, film was fundamentally distinct from even the most accurate of realistic paintings: it did not present a likeness of the movie star, but transported the star to the movie theater.

The thematic commonality that underlies the poetry, short stories, novels, films, essays and manifestoes that this dissertation examines is the idea that the cinema—and its predecessor, photography—alter the distinction between subjects and objects. This distinction centers on the

presence or absence of an inner world of thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations, desires, intentions and anxieties in a given entity. A 1925 essay by José Ortega y Gasset (discussed in Chapter Four) provides a useful summation of this difference: "Un hombre no es sólo un cuerpo, sino, tras un cuerpo, un alma, espíritu, conciencia, psique, yo, persona, como se prefiera llamar a toda esa porción del hombre que no es espacial, que es idea, sentimiento, volición, memoria, imagen, sensación, instinto" ("Sobre la expresión" 49); "El hombre exterior está habitado por un hombre interior. Tras del cuerpo está emboscada el alma" (51). By contrast, "El mineral es todo exterioridad" (50). As Ortega points out, a human being is composed not only of the details of his body that can be perceived by an outside observer, but also of an inner, extra-spatial "yo" that thinks and feels. This presence of this inner world in the subject is what differentiates it from an object, such as a mineral, which consists only of its material form. The object can be fully known and understood by experiencing it aesthetically—observing how it looks, sounds, feels, smells and tastes. A human being cannot be wholly known through physical observation, because while the person's inner world is communicated to the external world through verbal language, facial expressions and bodily gestures, part of this interiority remains perpetually inaccessible to the outside observer. My assertion is that the texts I examine here either implicitly or explicitly present the cinema as a force that moves the dividing line between entities that contain an inner world and those that are devoid of one.

These texts suggest that what makes film so powerful—whether for positive or negative reasons—is that it causes the viewer to experience subjects as objects and vice versa. The image projected onto a movie screen is an object: it is merely a set of chromatic values that does not feel pain or act with agency. This is equally true of film images of human beings and film images of landscapes or automobiles. However, as noted above, the central illusion of film is the

spectator's (often unconscious) belief that as he gazes at the human figures on the movie screen he watches and even interacts with actual people, who appear to return his gaze as they stare directly into the camera. Through this illusion, the properties of a human subject—the capacity to love, hate, desire and stare passionately into someone's eyes—get transferred onto an inanimate image. As this image undergoes the modifications that reveal unambiguously its status as an object, the spectator does not simply undo his projection of subjective qualities onto the image. Rather, the consequence of these cinematic modifications is that the onscreen human figure remains a human being in the mind of the spectator, but one disturbingly endowed with the inert, unfeeling characteristics of an object. When the film image is cropped to show only a body part or an isolated head, the body of a human being appears to have been grotesquely amputated. When the film image disappears suddenly at the end of a scene, it seems that an actual person has vanished without warning, defying the laws of physics. When the film image of a person dissolves into that of an object, a human being appears to have crossed the boundaries of his or her category to morph into an entirely other type of entity.

This dissertation encompasses texts with diverse attitudes toward film's blurring of the line between subjects and objects. Several of these texts' authors are typical of the avant-garde's provocatively hostile stance toward anything that could be considered a product of the nineteenth century: "traditional" art, academia and other institutions, and philosophical or cultural ideas propagated by the generation of one's parents and grandparents. Since the idea of the distinction between subjects and objects—and even more so, the hierarchy that situates the former as superior to the latter—are an essential component of the worldview underlying the majority of Western art and philosophy since the beginning of the modern era, many avant-garde artists saw the rejection and degradation of these concepts as the ultimate defiance of tradition. Declaring

the essential lack of differentiation between human beings and things was, for these artists, a thrilling means of disavowing any continuity with the past and declaring their allegiance to the radical new spirit of the twentieth century. The artists who held these beliefs revered film as a force that was on the side of the new century, heralding in an age in which humans and their inner worlds of emotions and thoughts were no longer at the center of the world.

For others among the artists included in this study, the cinema's disturbance of the subject-object distinction was a source not of excitement but of anxiety. A recurring theme throughout Spanish avant-garde texts that address film is the idea that the altered role of the human being on the movie screen contaminates interpersonal relationships in the world outside the theater. The indisputably lifelike quality of the film image impedes the maintenance of a clear boundary between the human figures that appear on the screen and those that one encounters in regular life. Several texts thus implicitly pose the question: if the film star who gazes at and flirts with me is revealed to be an unthinking object, how can I be sure that the people with whom I engage in real life do in fact have inner worlds and are not mere images masquerading as live beings? The anxiety these texts express about the illusory effects of the cinema broaches the broader philosophical question of the link between perception and reality—the difficulty of knowing with certainty whether one's senses provide proof of the world outside one's head. They also allude to the fragility of intimacy in an age in which entities with inner worlds are indistinguishable from those devoid of inner worlds. The foundation of intimacy is the feeling of sharing inner experience with another human being, of believing that one's sphere of thoughts and emotions is accessible to someone else and, conversely, that one is capable of entering another person's inner world. A subset of the texts in this dissertation connect the cinema to alienation by implying that film's confusion of subjects and objects generates the

suspicion that one is never engaging with other subjects—that is, with beings that contain a dimension of depth or interiority beyond the sensory information contained in their surfaces.[1]

The gamut of reactions, from enthusiasm to unease, that the cinema provoked in its early spectators can be observed not only across the texts contained in this study but often within the body of work of an individual artist. Most of the authors whose work I examine present contradictory statements about film, alternately praising and denouncing the film image's qualities, or they express an ambivalent attitude toward the medium that encompasses both fascination and fear. This inconsistency reflects the uncertain status of the subject in the avant-garde—is the human being's inner world a relic to be dispensed with or the ultimate source of radical new art?—as well as the difficulty of fully understanding the medium of cinema as it rapidly evolved in the first decades of its existence. What is interesting about this collection of texts is that the contradictory value judgments they make about film are underlain by a consistent statement about the medium's effects. Whether they celebrate or express suspicion toward this aspect of film, all the texts in this dissertation communicate the idea that the essential distinction

[1] In a 1914 essay, Ortega expounds on the gulf that separates a person's inner experience from the entire exterior world to which his senses afford him access. Our own "yo," or inner self, writes Ortega, is "lo único que […] no podemos convertir en cosa" ("Ensayo de estética" 251); everything and everyone outside of our self is essentially an object, or "thing," in the sense that it exists for us only as sensory information. Ortega compares the first-person experience of walking ("yo ando") with that of observing someone else walk ("el andar de 'él'"): "La diferencia no puede ser mayor. Diríase que en el 'yo ando' me refiero al andar visto por dentro […] y en 'él anda', al andar visto en su exterior resultado" (251). Ortega's point is that in our own, inner experience of walking, we perceive the thoughts and bodily sensations associated with this action. When watching someone else walk, we perceive only "the exterior result" of this action—the image of moving legs and the sound of feet hitting the pavement. He asserts that another person's pain or emotion is inaccessible to us, because we do not experience the feelings themselves but only their surface-level manifestation: "El dolor o el odio ajenos, ¿quién los ha sentido? Solo vemos una fisionomía contraída, unos ojos que punzan de través. ¿Qué hay en estos objetos visuales de común con lo que yo hallo en mí cuando hallo en mí dolor u odio?" (251); "El dolor doliendo es lo contrario de su imagen" (252). Ortega's statement that "solo con una cosa tenemos una relación íntima: esta cosa es nuestro individuo, nuestra vida" (254) is a declaration of the impossibility of ever achieving intimacy with another person, because the only inner world we truly experience is our own. While this assessment of human relationships is hyperbolic and pessimistic in the extreme, it is relevant to the texts in this study that express anxiety about the effects of film. Like Ortega, these texts suggest that to experience another person wholly as an image is to be unable to connect to that person as a fellow subject or "yo." Ortega's identification of the distance that exists between "'yo' y toda otra cosa, sea ella un cuerpo inánime o un 'tú', un 'él'" (252) illustrates how this mode of perceiving the world reduces every non-self entity—from another human being to a plastic toy—to an equal existence as an object.

between the human and the non-human undergoes alteration in the world of the movie screen. This group of texts also manifests thematic similarity across differences in genre. The Spanish avant-garde contains many essays, articles and manifestoes that directly present theories of film, several of which I analyze. The ideas expressed in these theoretical texts—their characterizations of the medium of film and the experience of the moviegoer—are echoed and prefigured in poems, short stories and novels that implicitly put forth similar statements about the nature of the cinema. By drawing out these correspondences, this project illustrates how theories of film and other aspects of twentieth-century modernity are frequently embodied in literary texts of the avant-garde; in many cases, the poetry and fiction of this period constitute as rich a source of meditations on modernity as their explicitly theoretical counterparts.

My first chapter explores Salvador Dalí's essays on photography and film in the late 1920s, which celebrate these media for their inherently "objective" nature. (Chapter One differs from the other chapters in that its focus is not on the cinema specifically but on the image captured by the camera, whether moving or still; for Dalí, photography and film appear to constitute a single medium.) Dalí sees the photographic or filmic image as an arena in which the object circumvents the subjective perception of the artist and is free to represent itself and assert its true meaning. The camera embodies for him the ideal of "neutral vision": a mode of seeing that bypasses the subjectivist hierarchies of regular life, allowing the distinction between the active and the passive, the powerful and the weak, to be re-determined in a way that does not privilege the human being. Dalí and his fellow members of the Catalan anti-art movement revere photography and film for escaping the tendency of traditional art to look "per dintre" at the inner world of the subject and for focusing instead on the objective "mon dels fets." He and his collaborators suggest that when captured by the camera, a human being's capacity for will and

agency disappears, making him equal to the things that surround him: on the movie screen, film stars like Harry Langdon and Buster Keaton are rendered as insentient and involuntary as everyday objects. I examine the contradictions present in Dalí's many statements about photography, which revolve around the artist's irresolvable attraction to both subjectivity and objectivity—a simultaneous passion and contempt for the inner experience of the human being. This chapter establishes the focus of the dissertation as a whole by exploring the idea that the camera makes irrelevant any inner distinctions between the beings and things it depicts and effectuates an objectification of the human subject as he or she is converted into an image.

Reflecting the content of Dalí's essays, Chapter One approaches photography and film as instruments for depicting reality, theorizing the process by which the camera creates its images. In the chapter that follows, I shift my focus to the early moviegoer's experience of the cinematic image. Chapter Two begins with a close reading of a 1928 short story by Francisco Ayala that showcases the intense emotional effects that the close-up was capable of arousing in the spectator in the years before the technique became a naturalized and essentially invisible component of film. "Polar, estrella" centers on a man whose obsession with a Greta Garbo-like star is sustained by the sensuous close-ups of her face that fill her many films. At the dramatic climax of the story, however, a malfunction in a movie theater projector causes the image on the screen to be split between two partial frames of the star's body: Polar's legs and feet appear above her torso and head, isolating her body parts from one another and grotesquely scrambling her form in the manner of a Cubist portrait. Given that the projector glitch essentially consists of two close-up images, this story makes manifest the paradox of the close-up: it provides a powerful illusion of closeness and intimacy with the onscreen person, but—in presenting the star's body dissected and rearranged as only an object could be—it also brutally lays bare the

falseness of this illusion of intimacy. Drawing on other critics' observation that Ayala employs a literary version of close-up in many of his other fiction pieces of the period, I examine the connection between his use of this narrative technique and the role of the close-up in "Polar, estrella." I argue that Ayala consistently presents the close-up as an agent of dehumanization, creating the sense that the person thus filmed or described is object-like and unreachable. I connect Ayala's employment of the close-up to early film theorists' comments on this technique, which describe it as a tool for making the human body appear unrecognizable and foreign, and thus weakening the spectator's ability to experience identification and intimacy with the onscreen person.

At the heart of the drama of "Polar, estrella" is the protagonist's engagement with the film image of Polar as though he were interacting with the star herself. Polar's face in close-up appears to testify to her nearness to him, and the scrambling of her onscreen form seems to be a modification not of a mere image but of the very body he so desires. The texts discussed in Chapter Three similarly address the confusion of the reproduction with reality. I begin the chapter by analyzing Pedro Salinas's poems from the 1920s that describe the experiences of watching a film and talking on the telephone. These poems identify two unsettling deceptions enacted by these technologies: the copy's usurping of the original—in that the reproduction is taken as the entity it depicts—and the substitution of simulated, electronic presence for actual presence. The anxiety expressed in these poems evokes the difficulty, in an era of rapid expansion of communication technologies, of distinguishing between the presence of highly convincing facsimiles and that of flesh-and-blood beings. I then examine Salinas's poetry and short stories from the period spanning 1924 to 1931 to demonstrate how frequently the themes contained in his poems about technology recur in his work of these years. Throughout these

poems and stories, the figure of the lover often shares the illusory qualities of the film image or the voice on the telephone: she is apparently present before the poetic speaker or protagonist but flickers with insubstantiality, seeming likely to vanish into thin air without warning. These texts suggest that the ubiquity of lifelike technological doubles is the source of the speakers' and protagonists' paranoia. At the same time, however, they also present the reproduction as being uniquely poised to assuage this anxiety. In the face of the lover's ephemerality, the speakers and protagonists seek a second version of her—in the form of a copy or double—that they can possess indefinitely. These texts thus illustrate the paradoxical nature of the technological reproduction: it simultaneously provides a comforting illusion of control over the presence of a desired entity and diminishes the reliability of one's senses as a guarantor of reality.

Chapter Four connects film to physiognomy, the pseudoscience of "reading" character and personality traits on the visible surface of a person's body. Several early theories of film considered the cinema to follow the logic of physiognomy. According to these theorists, the human form that appeared on the movie screen lacked a distinction between exteriority and interiority, appearance and essence: the bodily features, facial expressions and even clothing of a cinematic character testified to the inner characteristics of the actor. This chapter centers on Ramón Gómez de la Serna's 1923 novel *Cinelandia,* a parody of Hollywood that depicts a "cinematic city" in which actors embody their filmic roles at all times and accept the identity of their assigned character as their own. The defining ethos of Cinelandia is also the founding belief of physiognomy: the idea that a person is exactly what he appears to be. Gómez de la Serna's novel associates physiognomic logic with both film and the modern metropolis, satirizing the tendency of the moviegoer and the urban flâneur to determine character immediately and definitively on the sole basis of appearance. Although the novel mocks rather than concurs with

the idea that a character's onscreen image constitutes proof of the actor's essential self, it provides a useful illustration of physiognomic film theory in that it responds to the spectator's instinctual assumption that, on the movie screen, what is visible is what is true. Like the texts analyzed in Chapters Two and Three, *Cinelandia* addresses the phenomenon of mistaking the film image for reality and failing to distinguish between one-dimensional entities and those with inner worlds. Because physiognomy denies the idea of an inner sphere in man that is inaccessible to the outside observer, its function is essentially to relate to subjects as though they were objects. By connecting this logic to the spectator's experience of the film image, Gómez de la Serna demonstrates how the cinema enacts a confusion between human beings and things.

Chapter Five takes as its point of departure Ortega's 1924 essay "La deshumanización del arte," which advocates for art that places people and objects on the same plane by attending only to their external, visible surfaces and ignoring their internal differences. Ortega is especially enthralled by metaphor, which he presents as "el más radical instrumento de deshumanización" (374) because of its capacity for making an entity transform into something categorically different but visually similar: a girl's rosy cheek into an apple, or a waving hand into a bird's flapping wing. This chapter highlights the similarities between metaphor as employed by avant-garde poets, Gómez de la Serna's *greguerías* and the cinematic technique of dissolve as it appears in films like Dalí and Luis Buñuel's *Un chien andalou* (1929). All of these techniques, I argue, constitute a form of metaphor that evokes the superimposition of two or more highly dissimilar entities—such as subjects and objects—in such a way that their aesthetic correspondence is foregrounded. For poets interested in *deshumanización*, Gómez de la Serna and avant-garde filmmakers, the purpose of metaphor is to situate beings and things that a subjectivist, human-centric position considers to be opposites in a relationship of equivalence.

Chapter Five thus returns to a concept introduced in Chapter One: the idea of the camera as an agent of "neutral vision" with the potential for reordering the hierarchies of the world. Dalí, Buñuel and many other commentators on the cinema point out the essential sameness that categorizes the relationship between human beings and objects in the world of a film. On the movie screen of the 1920s, all entities are silent, existing only as collections of lines and shadows, and the intentional movements of a subject are indistinguishable from the involuntary motion of an inanimate object. These are the characteristics of film as a whole, but, as works like *Un chien andalou* demonstrate, the dissolve's technique of smoothly merging together people and things serves to heighten the viewer's awareness of the cinema's radical capacity for undoing traditional categorizations.

The texts I examine in this dissertation do not present the world that is contained on the movie screen as an isolated sphere sealed within the four walls of the theater. Rather, all of these texts evoke osmosis between the "reality" of the filmic world and the reality that the artists and theorists experience as they go about their daily lives. The cinema, they suggest, was such a powerful and unprecedented phenomenon because the qualities of the film—the form of perception that it engendered and the altered relationships among beings and things that it begot—influenced the moviegoer's experience of his surroundings in regular life. Film constituted not only a new art form but a new way of seeing, one that could (and inevitably would) be trained on the world at large. The essence of this new mode of perception was its exclusive attention to the visual, and as a consequence, the belief that reality was equivalent to what could be perceived by the eyes. These texts depict the experience of existing during an era in which the distinction between images and live beings, between what appears to be animate and what actually experiences thought and emotion, was being rendered nebulous. The

weakening of this distinction was a cause for celebration for the artists who wished to destabilize one of the Western world's most entrenched hierarchies, while it provoked anxiety in those who perceived its detrimental effect on human relationships. As previously noted, the differences in these artists' value judgments of the cinema are less significant than their shared characterization of the medium. Together, the texts collected in this dissertation present a portrait of the early spectator's experience not only of the movie theater itself but of the form of reality that was irrevocably altered by the advent of the camera's mode of vision.

Chapter One

Mirar És Inventar: Objectivity and Subjectivity in Salvador Dalí's Essays on Photography

In the last years of the 1920s, Salvador Dalí was obsessed with photography. Of the many essays the artist published in Catalan- and Castilian-language art journals between 1927 and 1929, a significant portion are dedicated to his celebration of photography and film. Repeatedly, he enumerates the positive qualities of these media and declares their superiority to other, more traditional art forms. In other essays from the same period, Dalí does not explicitly mention photography but uses the attributes of the photograph as a rubric by which to separate good art from bad art: art that he favors—such as his own paintings—is praised on the same terms as the photograph, while art he disdains is dismissed for failing to emulate photography. By the early 1930s, when Dalí began to articulate his concept of the Paranoid Critical method, he was heavily guided by his by-then well-established theory of photography. Indeed, it would seem that Dalí's obsessive, contradictory and at times bizarre ideas about photography served as a prototype for Paranoid Criticism, which became his signature mode of art interpretation and of perception itself.

What about photography was so compelling to Dalí that it caused him to return to the subject again and again and to use it as a model for his personal method of viewing the world? The central quality of photography that he emphasizes in every essay on the topic is *objectivity*. For Dalí, photography was seductive and exhilarating because it was the first artistic medium to circumvent the human subject and endow the lifeless object with freedom and autonomy. Like

the many critics who have praised photography since its inception in the mid-nineteenth century, Dalí celebrates its unprecedented accuracy, its ability to capture details that are invisible or insignificant to the human eye. What makes Dalí's interest in photography unusual, however, is that his glorification of the medium is rooted in his belief that photography inverts the traditional hierarchy between thinking, feeling, creative subjects and inanimate objects. Photography, he asserts, attends to the "world of facts" rather than to human concerns such as imagination and emotion. In a photograph, a person or an animal is no more significant than a rock, a tree or an industrial commodity: all are equal, each merely a cluster of lines and shadows. Most importantly, in a photograph an object is not made to be subordinate to a human artist's subjective ideas, whether these be individual or cultural. The photographed object speaks for itself and is thus free to assert its true, essential meaning.

The camera, the photograph and the film reel were, Dalí declared, perfect embodiments of the concept of objectivity, understood as both the absence of subjective bias and the triumph of the object. The connection between photography and objectivity is the thesis of every essay he wrote on the medium, reiterated ad nauseam throughout his written body of work in the late 1920s. Yet when read closely, these essays reveal themselves to be peppered with contradictions. Alongside his repeated declarations of photography's total externality to the human subject are statements that align photography with precisely the aspects of subjectivity that he otherwise celebrates the medium for eschewing: human culture, the subconscious, genius and artistic intent, emotion and lyricism. Analyzed together, Dalí's essays on photography indicate that their author was attracted to photography not because he truly saw the medium as a pure, unadulterated manifestation of objectivity, but because it represented a fusion of the subjective and objective. Photography fascinated Dalí because it could symbolize either the radical absence

of the human mind or the expression of the mind's deepest fantasies and desires; the advent of photography and film could herald the annihilation of the self, or, alternatively, the triumph of the self over rationality and objectivity. Dalí's collection of essays on photography reveal the artist's irreconcilable devotion to both objectivity and subjectivity, a tension that would remain unresolved in his work throughout his life.

I. Photography as Symbol of the Objective in Dalí's Essays

Dalí's extensive collection of essays on photography and film in the late 1920s return repeatedly to the same set of qualities that he sees as the source of photography's superiority. These qualities center on the absence or weakening of the human agent and the empowerment of the object. Photography, Dalí believes, reflects rather than creates. The human interests that have traditionally motivated art—imagination, morality, the artist's inner world—are, in photography, no longer at the center of the artwork. While in a painting, a represented object serves as a symbol of the painter's subjective ideas, in a photograph these ideas are stripped away and the naked, pure object represents nothing but itself. The camera is attentive to the objective, material world rather than the mind of the artist, and thus the world of objects gains independence from, and power over, the subjective realm.

Dalí expresses these concepts in his first essay dedicated to photography, which establishes the core set of photography's attributes that he would reiterate and refine in later texts. The essay, "La fotografia, pura creació de l'esperit," published in the Catalan arts journal *L'amic de les arts* in September 1927, emphasizes the objective nature of photography and its radical alterity to human subjectivity. The first lines of the essay make clear that Dalí's praise of photography will stem from the objectivity he attributes to both the medium and the camera: "Clara objectivitat del petit aparell fotogràfic. Cristall objectiu" (90). He immediately connects

this objectivity to the absence of the human artist: "La mà deixa d'intervenir." These two qualities of photography—its objectivity and its exclusion of the human—are the points he will underline again and again throughout the essay, demonstrating that the former derives from the latter. When the process of art making is no longer entrusted to the human mind, eyes and hands but rather to an inanimate machine, true art flourishes: "Quan les mans deixen d'intervenir, […] la inspiració es deslliga del procès tècnic, que és confiat únicament al càlcul inconscient de la màquina. […] Confiem en les noves maneres de fantasia, nascudes de les senzilles transposicions objectives." The "unconscious calculation of the machine," with its "simple objective transactions," is more effective at achieving the goals of art—inspiration and fantasy—than the subjective mind and organic body of the human artist. Indeed, Dalí makes clear that the camera is a superior artist precisely because it is unconscious. Unlike the painter, who filters what he perceives through his own thoughts and emotions, the camera reflects the object exactly as it is; it does not intervene.[2]

He goes on to celebrate the camera for its perfect ability to see, a vision unfettered by the handicaps that encumber the human eye. Dalí enjoins the reader to appreciate "l'immediat miracle d'obrir els ulls" and chastises those who would close their eyes: "Tancar els ulls, és una manera anti-poètica de percebre ressonàncies." Seeing well should be the goal of every artist, he asserts: "Saber mirar és tot un nou sistema d'agrimensura espiritual. Saber mirar és una mena d'inventar" (90–91). And what human gaze could be as perfect, what human eye as perpetually

[2] While Dalí's conception of the photographic process—the idea that the photographer plays no artistic role in the creation of the image, and that the photograph is a neutral reflection of reality—is a common attitude toward the medium held by many laypeople, it is important to note that this attitude is somewhat naïve, in that it fails to consider the many intentional, subjective decisions that go into the creation of a photograph. Dalí does not account for the fact that through choices such as angling the camera, framing the image (both while taking the photo and while printing) and increasing or decreasing the contrast during the developing and printing processes, the photographer exerts a significant degree of agency over the final image. These choices are a factor in all forms of photography, including those that aim for the strictest realism and objectivity. Of course, many photographers also consciously use their medium as a means of artistic expression and strive to intervene creatively in the photographic process as much as possible.

open, as “la mirada anestèsica de l’ull netíssim, absent de pestanyes, del Zeiss: destil·lat i atent, impossible a la floració rosada de la conjuntivitis” (91)? Free from human flaws like eyelashes and conjunctivitis, the camera embodies the ideal of unimpeded vision that Dalí sees as the zenith of art.[3] The image of the open eye serves as his symbol of the perfect artist because it trains its focus on the external, material world; the closed eye, which he disparages, looks inward at the subject’s interior world. It is on this basis that he praises the realist painters Henri Rousseau,[4] Johannes Vermeer and Johan Van der Meer—Van der Meer “conserva intacte l’objecte amb una inspiració tota fotogràfica” (90)—and expresses his disdain for surrealism’s interest in dreams and the subconscious: “Només allò que som capaços de somniar està mancat d’originalitat” (90); “¡Fantasia fotogràfica; més àgil i ràpida en troballes que els tèrbols processos subconscients!” (91).

By celebrating photography’s ability to reflect the world objectively, without intervention on the part of the artist, Dalí was echoing the praise people had given to photography since its origins. The historian of photography Mary Warner Marien notes that long before the actual invention of photography, there persisted “the yearning in Western culture for a means of representation free from omission, distortion, style, murky subjectivity or outside influence”; in sum, the ideal of photography was the possibility of “neutral vision” (5). Marien quotes the French critic André Bazin’s observation that “the originality of the photographic medium rested

[3] In Luis Buñuel’s 1928 article “‘Découpage’ o segmentación cinegráfica,” he describes “el objetivo” as “‘ese ojo sin tradición, sin moral, sin prejuicios, capaz, sin embargo, de interpretar por sí mismo’” (172). It is unclear from whom Buñuel is quoting, but this characterization of the camera lens as a superhuman eye that is made superior by its freedom from human impediments strongly invites comparison with Dalí’s essay. The reference in Buñuel’s quote to the camera’s lack of traditions, morals and prejudices finds correspondence in Dalí’s figuration of the camera as a “very clean” eye untainted by eyelashes or conjunctivitis.

[4] The reader may be surprised by the inclusion of Rousseau in a list of realist painters, as he is known for his paintings of fantastical jungle scenes in the “primitive” style. Dalí’s praise of Rousseau runs parallel to his praise of the classically realist Dutch painters because he opposes Rousseau’s work to that of the impressionists—“Henri Rousseau sabe mirar millor que els impresionistes” (90)—implying that Rousseau paints objects as they are rather than coloring them with his own subjective experience. This declaration is meant to both denigrate the impressionist style—which intentionally depicts reality as it is perceived by the flawed human eye—and disparage the taste of the art criticism establishment, which ridiculed Rousseau while venerating the impressionists.

on its 'essentially objective character.' […] The advent of photography was the 'first time an image of the world is formed automatically, without the creative intervention of man'" (8).[5] A reviewer of photography in 1859 commented, like Dalí, on photography's ability to imitate the body parts of the human artist while being free of his subjective processes: "While the sun-machine has eyes keen as an angel's, a hand swift, sure and fluent, it has no soul, no heart and no intellect" (qtd. in Marien 71). This reviewer sees photography's lack of what is most essentially human—soul, heart and intellect—as limitations on the medium's artistic potential, but for Dalí, photography's lack of these qualities is precisely what makes it the superior art form.

In "La fotografia, pura creació de l'esperit," Dalí presents painting as essentially different from, and inferior to, photography: while photography can deal directly with "facts," only "signs" exist in painting; while a photograph may present an object exactly as it is, a painter wishing to represent a jellyfish must paint a guitar or a clarinet-playing harlequin.[6] It is ironic, then, that in the issue of *L'amic de les arts* directly following the publication of "La fotografia," he praises his own work on the same terms he has just used to celebrate photography. In "Els meus quadros del saló de tardor" (October 1927), Dalí suggests that his own paintings reproduce objects objectively, in the manner of photography's neutral vision, and that the paintings can be understood if the viewer looks at them with this same neutral vision. He repeats from the earlier essay his idealization of "seeing well," implying that his paintings achieve photography's perfect mode of seeing: "Saber mirar un objecte, un animal, d'una manera espiritual, és veure'l en la seva màxima realitat objectiva. […] Per això he escrit recentment, en parlar de la fotografia:

[5] Similarly, in January 1839, Henry Fox Talbot, one of the medium's pioneers, published an account of photography whose title described his invention as "The Process by Which Natural Objects May Be Made to Delineate Themselves without the Aid of the Artist's Pencil" (qtd. in Batchen 56).

[6] "La fotografia llisca amb una continua fantasia damunt els nous fets, que en el pla pictòric tenen tan sols posibilitats de signe. El cristall fotogràfic pot […] analitzar les més subtils articulacions dels aparells elèctrics amb tota la irreal exactitud de la seva màgia. En pintura, per contra, si es vol pintar una medusa, és absolutamente necessari de representar una guitarra o un arlequí que toca el clarinet" (91).

Mirar és inventar" (n.p.). Dalí distinguishes between "la pintura anomenada *artística*," which he disdains as pretentious and meaningless, and "les meves coses," which, by contrast, are "anti-artístiques i directes. […] No són necessàries, com en l'altra pintura, […] *idees prèvies, prejudicis*. Cal només que siguin mirades amb uns ulls purs." Just as a photograph requires no knowledge of art theory in order to be understood, since the photographed object represents nothing other than itself, Dalí claims that his paintings are easily comprehended because they present objects in their "maximum objective reality." Echoing the disdain he expressed for surrealist art in his essay on photography, he asserts that his paintings are, like photographs, opposed to surrealism: "Tot això em sembla més que suficient per a fer veure la distància que em separa del superrealisme."

Dalí expanded upon the distinction he established in "Els meus quadros" between "artistic paintings" and his own "anti-artistic" works in an essay titled "Film-arte, film-antiartístico" and published in *La gaceta ilustrada* in late 1927. The essay centers on an opposition he puts forth between "art film" and "anti-art film," an opposition rooted in the polarity between individual expression and standardization. Art film, which Dalí derides, strives for originality, as it seeks to reflect the individual genius and personal emotions of the filmmaker: "El filmador artístico […] obedece a las arbitrariedades sentimentales de su genialidad" (225–226); "El film deviene pura ilustración de lo que imagina el artista genial" (228). The artistic filmmaker uses the camera as a tool for the expression of his inner world. By contrast, the anti-artistic filmmaker willingly subordinates himself to the camera: "Filma de una manera pura, obedeciendo únicamente a las necesidades técnicas de su aparato" (225). Dalí asserts that this anti-artistic mode of filmmaking produces films composed only of standardized emotions immediately understandable to all viewers. While the artistic filmmaker, "con un afán

risible de originalidad" (227), tries to express the most idiosyncratic ideas possible, the anti-artistic filmmaker "se limita a emociones psicológicas, primarias, constantes, estandartizadas" (226). Dalí is emphatic about the virtues of standardization in filmmaking: the emotions and images of anti-art film are "completamente definidas y claras en el concepto común de los miles de gentes que forman los grandes públicos cinemáticos"; anti-art film is "un perfeccionamiento logrado por el camino de estandartización" (226).

In the "Film-arte" essay, Dalí implies that the standardized anti-art films he celebrates embody the true spirit of the cinematic medium, and individualistic art films represent the adulterated influence of traditional, subjective art forms.[7] The cinematic image, and by extension the photograph, is presented as something easily understood by common people. The other quality that Dalí attributes to film in this essay is one he previously established in "La fotografia, pura creació de l'esperit": film's objectivity, understood as the granting of autonomy and power to inanimate objects. Contradicting his earlier assertion, in "Els meus quadros," of the commonalities between photography and his own paintings, he once again opposes painting to photography and film: "El mundo del cine y el de la pintura son bien distintos: precisamente las posibilidades de la fotografía y del cinema están en esta ilimitada fantasía que nace de las cosas mismas" (229). While artistic cinema and painting employ the represented object as a symbol of emotions and ideas from the artist's inner world, anti-artistic cinema—*true* cinema—allows fantasy to be born from the object itself. This "cinema antiartístico" is "la objetividad desnuda" (229) because the filmmaker subordinates his art to the object, and not the other way around. Dalí's distinction between anti-art film and art film corresponds to that of the American photographer C. Jabez Hughes, who, as Marien notes, distinguished between "mechanical or

[7] For example, he characterizes the artistic filmmaker as "corrompido por la absorción inasimilada de la literatura" (226–227).

literal photography," which aims "at simple representation of objects to which the camera is pointed,"[8] and "art photography," in which "the artist, not content with taking things as they may naturally occur, determines to infuse his mind into them by arranging, modifying or otherwise disposing them" (86–87). Marien characterizes art photography as proceeding from "imagination, genius or taste" (87). Dalí would concur with this description of artistic photography and film, adding to it a negative value judgment. For him, any work of art that expresses the imagination, genius or taste of the artist is contemptible; photography is the medium he most highly praises because it is the most alien to these subjective sensibilities.

In subsequent essays, Dalí would reiterate again and again his hatred for art that allows human subjectivity to intervene in the representation of objective reality. "Poesia de l'útil standarditzat" (*L'amic de les arts*, March 1928) emphasizes the idea that objects already contain their own poetry, and that the task of the artist is simply to allow the object to express itself. Dalí feverishly extols the new industrial commodities of the twentieth century and affirms their inherent poetry: "Teléfon, lavabo a pedals, blaques neveres brunyides al ripolin, bidet, petit fonògraf… ¡Objectes d'autèntica i puríssima poesia!" (176); "L'objecte polit, acabat de fabricar […] ens ofereix la seva poesia" (177); "¿Es pot ser tan cec de no veure l'espiritualitat i noblesa de l'objecte bell en si?" (177). He laments that the "precisió asèptica, anti-artística" of these industrial objects is frequently "substituïda pel gust artístic" (176). By contrast, he praises advertisements that feature a simple photo of the product, eschewing any subjective ornamentation: "Meravelloses fotografies de sabates, poètiques com la més emocionant creació

[8] Hughes's description of "mechanical or literal photography" and Dalí's concept of anti-art film are echoed in Béla Balázs's *The Spirit of Film* (1930): "Does pure objectivity simply not exist? […] Can we not simply see things as they are? Yes we can. […] There are films that simply show objects; they have no desire to transmit knowledge, but detach their objects instead from every conceivable context and from every relation with other objects. They are objects pure and simple. And the image in which they appear does not point to anything beyond itself, whether to other objects or to a meaning" (159).

de Picasso" (176).[9] In "Nous limits de la pintura" (*L'amic de les arts*, Feb.–May 1928), Dalí once again applauds realist painters for "seeing well," and denigrates impressionism for deforming reality through subjective vision. He declares the need for an artistic medium that will represent reality in all its objective poetry: "La realitat […] adquireix el més objectiu patetisme poètic que sols ha pogut ésser possible en el moment en què s'ha trobat una nova i adequada manera d'expresió" ("Nous limits" 168). Although Dalí does not mention photography, we can infer from his previous statements about the medium that photography is the "new mode of expression" adequate to the task of objectively capturing reality. He goes on to celebrate the "moment en què les coses s'han isolat del convingut i han pogut usar lliurement de les seves qualitats específiques i individualismes" ("Nous limits," *L'amic* 24, 186). Photography, as Dalí would make clear in later texts, makes possible this moment in which things free themselves from convention and reveal their true qualities.

As we have seen in the "Els meus quadros" essay, Dalí occasionally expressed his admiration for certain painters (such as himself) by comparing their work to photography. In a special issue of *L'amic de les arts* dedicated to Joan Miró (June 1928), he published an essay lauding Miró's paintings for their ability to capture reality directly, employing the same objective mode of vision he attributes to photography in many other texts. Dalí asserts that Miró's paintings lead the viewer to "apreciar i constatar […] la realitat mateixa" (202). Looking at one of these paintings, we are privileged with the experience of seeing the world as it truly is; our vision is freed from the fetters normally imposed on it by convention, intelligence and culture:

> Efectivament, en un estat d'esperit particularment distret, i per tant absent de tota acció imaginativa, […] l'espectacle d'un carro de vela, aturat i enganxat a un animal, pot súbitament convertir-se en el més minuciós i torbador conjunt màgic, en el moment de considerar la vela del carro i les cordes mogudes pel vent com a

[9] Dalí opposes these simple photographic ads to those that showcase artistic intent: "¡Deplorable anunci en el qual hom ha intervingut artísticament!" (177).

> part viva i palpitant del conjunt, puix que realment són les úniques que es belluguen davant dels nostres ulls, i, per contra, el cavall quiet com a continuació inanimada, inerta, de les rodes i de la fusta.
> Es tracta, doncs, de la possessió instantània de la realitat en un moment en què el nostre esperit considera l'esmentat conjunt, fora de la imatge estereotipada, anti-real, que la intel·ligència ha anat formant artificialment. (202)

This passage emphasizes the neutral vision behind Miró's work. Like the photograph, the anti-artistic film and Dalí's own paintings, Miró's canvasses strip away the "stereotypical, unreal" image of the world that our human intelligence has "artificially" created; they also bypass the consciously creative process of "imaginative action." What remains is reality in its true, objective state, unaltered by the revisions of a subjective mind. Significantly, Dalí presents this objective reality as an alternate universe in which the distinctions between subjects and objects are meaningless. While a subjective perception of this horse-drawn cart would privilege the one animate being in the group—the horse—the objective vision that Dalí describes grants power only to what is visibly in motion. The reins and the canvas attached to the cart are "alive" because they dance in the wind, whereas the horse, which stands still, is as "inanimate" and "inert" as the wheels and the wood of the cart. In Dalí's objective reality, objects cease to be subordinate to subjects; they assert their power and autonomy. What is necessary for the actualization of this reality is a neutral mode of vision that circumvents the biases of the subjective mind.[10]

Dalí elaborated upon these ideas in "Realidad y sobrerealidad" (*La gaceta literaria*, October 1928), which centers on the concept of a true form of reality opposed to the

[10] It is ironic that Dalí sees Miró's paintings as embodying photography's objective mode of vision, as most people would not hesitate to classify Miró's highly abtracted, childlike style as an unambiguous example of subjective vision. Indeed, his paintings constitute an obvious defiance of the hyperrealist approach of the Dutch Baroque painters whom Dalí lauds in "La fotografia, pura creació de l'esperit." The contrast between these painters' work and that of Miró is made most manifest in the latter's 1928 *Dutch Interior (I)*. This painting mimics a seventeenth-century work by Hendrick Martensz Sorgh of a lute player in a domestic scene but renders the tableau in Miró's signature style of brightly colored, flattened shapes that bear only a vague resemblance to the human and animal figures that populate the original painting.

conventional reality that most people perceive. In this essay, he repeats the image of the horse-drawn cart and adds a description of a jockey riding a horse that serves the same rhetorical purpose: what, Dalí asks, prevents us from seeing the reins and the hairs on the jockey's arms as alive and the jockey and horse as inert objects?[11] This form of reality in which subject-object distinctions are nullified or inverted is a state in which things liberate themselves from arbitrary convention and express their essential qualities: "Las cosas, evadiéndose de la absurda ordenación a que nuestra inteligencia las ha violentado, transmutando su valor real por otro estrictamente convencional, advertimos cómo liberadas éstas de las mil extrañas atribuciones a que estaban sometidas, recobran su consubstancial y peculiar manera de ser" (7). He emphasizes that this form of reality is accessible only when we turn off the parts of our minds that deal with intelligence or human culture. This reality is "lejos de cualquier estado de cultura"; on the contrary, it is allied with "lo más elemental y puro del instinto." Dalí also makes clear that the superior reality he describes is an objective reality, hostile to subjective modes of perception: "No cesaremos de oponer el dato objetivo a la híbrida poesía aproximada, infectada de un subjetivismo"; "Amamos la emoción viva de las transcripciones estrictamente objetivas." This objective reality is best captured by "el antiarte, producido por necesidades […] alejadas de todo sistema estético." Indeed, photography—for Dalí, the apogee of anti-art—is the most successful means of stripping away the subjective illusion of the world and replacing it with objective

[11] "… sería cuestión de preguntarse si realmente el jinete monta el caballo o si lo único suelto y montable del conjunto es el cielo que se recorta entre las patas, si las riendas no son, efectivamente, la prolongación en una distinta calidad de los mismísimos dedos de la mano, si en realidad los pelitos del brazo del jinete tienen más capacidad vertiginosa que el mismísimo caballo, y si éste, lejos de ser apto para el movimiento, está precisamente sujeto al terreno por espesas raíces parecidas a cabellera que le nacen inmediatamente de las pezuñas y que llegan dolorosamente hasta unas capas profundas del terreno cuya substancia húmeda está relacionada, por una palpitación sincrónica, con las mareas de unos lagos de baba de ciertos planetas peludos que hay" (7).

reality. “El dato fotográfico,” he declares, “está siendo […] una constante revisión del mundo exterior, cada vaz más objeto de duda.”[12]

After a series of essays devoted to objective reality, objective vision and the power of objects, in which photography is referenced only occasionally, Dalí returned his full attention to photography in several texts published in 1929 that elucidate the connection between the medium and the concept of objectivity that he has presented. The first of these, “La dada fotogràfica” (*Gaseta de les arts*, February 1929), restates some of his key arguments in favor of photography, already put forth in earlier texts. He asserts the inferiority of the human artist in comparison with the camera, and declares the necessity of replacing the former with the latter: “No ens cansarem de repetir les lamantables conseqüències ocasionades pertot allí on d’una manera o d’altra hagi intervingut l’artista dibuixant. […] ¿Quan s’abandonarà el dibuixant ineficaç, inexistent, i serà aquest substituït per l’emoció viva de la dada fotogràfica?” (40). Once again, we see Dalí’s grievances with the subjective artist centering on the concept of *intervention*. The camera presents reality exactly as it is, preserving the power of objects; the artist, by contrast, distorts reality as he represents it, by papering it over with subjective hierarchies and meanings. Dalí praises photography for its ability to catalogue the world, to index objects without missing details or adding superfluous ornamentation: “La fotografia pot realment verificar la catalogació més completa, escrupolosa i emocionant que mai l’home no

[12] Dalí makes this statement shortly after praising the mode of vision underlying Miró’s paintings as one in which “la imagen estereotipada antirreal que nuestra inteligencia ha ido forjándose artificialmente, dotándole de atribuciones cognoscitivas, falsas, nulas por razón poética” is replaced by the scene revealing itself as it truly is (that is, the idea that the motionless elements of the scene are inert while those that move are alive). Given the context in which this statement appears, it seems clear that Dalí is connecting photography to this superior mode of vision: he draws a parallel between the “objective reality” that the camera reveals and the version of the horse-drawn cart scene in which the distinction between animate and inanimate beings is reconfigured. Thus, the term “the external world” here denotes the “stereotypical,” “unreal,” “artificial,” “cognitive,” “false” perception of reality that sees the horse as alive and the sail as inanimate. Given that elsewhere he also characterizes this type of perception as subjective, Dalí is aligning “the external world” with subjectivity and the mode of vision shared by Miró and the camera with objectivity. As I will demonstrate, this bizarre twist of logic that completely inverts the normal definition of objectivity epitomizes the contradictions and paradoxes that lie at the heart of Dalí’s theory of reality.

pogués imaginar" (40). He goes on to declare, "El sol fet de la transposició fotogràfia ja implica una total invenció: la captació d'una REALITAT INÈDITA" (40). This is a repetition of his dictum "Saber mirar és una mena d'inventar," which first appeared in "La fotografia, pura creació de l'esperit": the camera's unparalleled ability to see, he suggests, qualifies it as a radical new invention. Importantly, Dalí underscores the idea that photography captures a new, previously unknown form of reality, a reality unmarred by subjective interference. This "REALITAT INÈDITA" is the objective reality described in texts like "Joan Miró" and "Realidad y sobrerealidad": a reality in which things break free from their subordination to human ideas and assert their true meanings.

L'amic de les arts, the epicenter of the Catalan anti-art movement and the journal in which Dalí most frequently published in the late 1920s, released its final issue in March 1929. While a typical issue of *L'amic* filled the bulk of its pages with traditional art criticism, with polemical manifestoes sprinkled sporadically throughout, the last issue was devoted wholly to provocative declarations of the writers' anti-art sentiments. Dalí contributed several texts to this issue, and all emphasize his disgust for traditional art and idealization of photography as the acme of anti-art. In "L'alliberament dels dits," he announces once again his allegiance to the "world of facts" and his hatred for art that reflects other, more subjective worlds: "No caldrà que insisteixi sobre l'absolutament inadmisible que m'apareix avui, no solament el poema, sinó tota mena de producció literària que no respongui a l'anotació anti-artística, fidel, objectiva, del món dels fets, al significat dels quals demanem i n'esperem constantament la revelació" (6). Underlining his opposition to subjective art, he declares worthless "la imatge metàfora," "la difunta poesia" and "[la] imaginació." Dalí's fervent praise of photography was sufficiently well known at this point that he could casually allude to the obvious connection between the medium

and his anti-art attitude: "No és […] el moment de refer l'elogi fervorós de la dada fotogràfica." Rather, it was the moment to wander "pels camins de l'involuntari" and to observe "els simples fets que cada dia més violentament signifiquen dintre el coneixement la raó essencial." As he would illustrate in other articles in the issue, these two tenets of the anti-art movement—celebration of the involuntary and devotion to "the simple facts"—are manifest in photography and film.

In a short article titled "Sempre, per damunt de la música, Harry Langdon," Dalí presents the ideal photographic or cinematic image as one in which all subjective elements are converted to objects. In particular, he sees this consummate form of cinema in the works of the American comic film star Harry Langdon:

> Harry Langdon pot avui emocionar-me […] per la seva vida INVOLUNTÀRIA, COM LA D'UNA GOTA D'AIGUA. Harry Langdon és una coseta que es mou més inconscientment que les mateixes bestioles. Quan arqueja la boca per a somriure, quan ja ha somrigut, ell encara no ho sap, però tampoc no ho sabrà mai més. Harry és la vida elemental, el purament orgànic. […] ¡Absència absoluta de voluntat! Ell es mou igual que la mongetera quan obra les seves fulles. (3)

There are significant similarities between this description of Langdon onscreen and the images Dalí presented in earlier essays of the horse-drawn cart and the jockey riding a horse. Just as, through Dalí's objective mode of vision, the horse and the jockey cease to be privileged with more agency and life than the inanimate objects that surround them, in Langdon's films the actor seems no more autonomous than a water droplet or a green bean. Indeed, when onscreen Langdon becomes "a little thing"; Dalí suggests that cinema has the power to transform the thinking, willful man into an inert object. As in the "Film-arte" essay, he implies a distinction between a true form of cinema that is faithful to the medium's intended use and an adulterated version of cinema that registers the influence of subjective art. While Langdon is "una de les

flors més pures del cinema," Dalí denounces the recent sentimentalism of Charlie Chaplin, whom he labels a "putrefacte."[13]

In his ode to Harry Langdon, Dalí focuses on two qualities of Langdon that make the actor a hero of the anti-art movement, and thus worthy of Dalí's praise: his evident lack of volition, and his subversion of the subject-object hierarchy. In making himself resemble a bean or a drop of water, Langdon suggests the essential lack of difference between subjective beings and objects, allowing room for objects to be the stars of the show. In "Revista de tendències anti-artístiques," Dalí celebrates documentary film in terms that make clear that his fascination with film stems from the power the medium grants to seemingly insignificant objects. He presents documentary film as the pure product of the anti-art impetus—"Una tendència violentament anti-artística resta definida en l'impuls exacerbat vers el documental" (10)—and states that his ideal documentary film is one that gives "life" to things that are usually ignored: "Esperem que […] ens ofereixin el documental de la llarga vida dels pels d'una orella o el documental d'una pedra, o el de la vida al ralentit d'un corrent d'aire." For Dalí, film is not only capable of focusing its attention on ear hairs, stones and air currents, it is inherently allied with these small objects, and its purpose lies in granting them power and life. This augmented power of objects is achieved through the diminishing of the subjective agent, that is, the human mind.

At the end of the essay, he outlines a concept that is fundamental to his theory of photography. Dalí is in favor of *inspiration* and opposed to *imagination* because the former entails the passivity of the subject: "La pura inspiració […] és al revés de la imaginació; imaginació vol dir sempre intervenció, acció. […] La imaginació […] obeeix a la nostra voluntat.

[13] This same issue of *L'amic de les arts* contains an interview that Dalí conducted with his collaborator Luis Buñuel, in which Buñuel expresses a similar disdain for the recent work of Chaplin: "Charlot ya no hace reir más que a los intelectuales. Los niños se aburren con él. Los campesinos no lo comprenden. […] Y no volvamos ya nunca a verle" (16). Dalí, Buñuel and others sympathetic to the anti-art cause regarded Chaplin as a traitor who betrayed the simple, anti-artistic origins of comedic film in favor of intellectualism and sentimentality.

La inspiració és, per contra, allò involuntari, el *geyser* que rebenta inesperadament en el lloc més quiet de la costa." Art produced using the imagination reflects the desires and inner world of the artist; we are reminded of Dalí's disdainful assertion in "Film-arte" that the art film is a "pura ilustración de lo que imagina el artista genial." Imagination also constitutes the "intervention" that Dalí constantly wishes to avoid, as the artist imposes his subjective perception on the material world. By contrast, an (anti-)artist motivated by inspiration is, like Langdon, completely involuntary. This artist makes himself a passive receptacle for the world, which springs into the artwork like a geyser gushing suddenly from the earth.

In the opposition between inspiration and imagination, we see summarized many of the concepts Dalí has previously used to distinguish between photography and lesser art forms. In "La fotografia, pura creació de l'esperit," he writes that in photography "les mans deixen d'intervenir" and that inspiration is entrusted to the "càlcul inconscient de la màquina" (90). His repeated exaltations of "seeing well" and realist painting stem from the mandate that the artist reflect the outer world objectively—with neutral vision—and prevent his imagination from obscuring this perfect representation. In "Film-arte," he asserts that in photography and film, "la fantasía […] nace de las cosas mismas" (229); the anti-artistic photographer or cinematographer stands aside and allows this geyser-like fantasy to burst onto the photograph or screen of its own volition. His many references to a medium or reality in which things break free from the arbitrary, conventional meanings imposed on them and express their true essences communicate a desire for an art form that allows things to speak for themselves. Likewise, his constant disparaging of art that registers anything subjective amounts to a call for an art form that reflects rather than creates, that relies on inspiration from the material "world of facts" rather than self-centered imagination. To Dalí's mind, that art form is photography.

The numerous essays Dalí published on photography in the late 1920s are theoretical, devoted to the painter's ideas about photography as a medium rather than to analyses of individual photographs. In 1935, however, Dalí wrote an essay for the French surrealist journal *Minotaure* that illustrates how his theory of photography guides his reading of a concrete photograph. "Non-Euclidean Psychology of a Photograph" centers on a picture (published alongside the essay, and reproduced in the Appendix of this dissertation) of three people standing on a city sidewalk: two women stare unsmilingly into the camera, while behind them a man stands mostly obscured by the darkness of a doorway, his shadowy face seeming to hover incorporeally above the women. The suspicious, macabre appearance of the characters lends the photograph a sinister air, but Dalí declares that the picture's human content does not interest him: "Divert your eyes, I beg you (even if this is against your own will), away from the hypnotizing center of this photograph" (302). Instead, he asks that the reader turn his attention to the lower left-hand corner of the photograph, where a tiny object—according to Dalí, a discarded spool bare of thread—lies in the gutter. This threadless spool, writes Dalí, upsets the entire meaning and order of the photograph. By asserting its existence, against the intention or the awareness of either the photographer or the people being photographed, it demotes the apparent focal point of the picture—the human characters—to a mere secondary, superficial position.

The role the threadless spool plays in the *Minotaure* photo is strikingly similar to the concept Roland Barthes would term the "punctum" in *Camera Lucida* (1980). In Barthes's formulation, a photograph is composed of two elements: the "studium," a culturally motivated focal point of "human interest" (26), and the "punctum," a representative of the objective world that undermines the studium. The studium corresponds to what Dalí describes as the "obvious pathetic and disconcerting quality" (302) of the shady figures in the *Minotaure* photo; Barthes

gives similar examples of a woman weeping over her dead son's body or Andy Warhol coyly covering his face with his hands. The studium is aligned with the viewer's conscious, socialized mind: it is "a consequence of my knowledge, my culture" (25), and "it is culturally […] that I participate in the figures, the faces, the gestures" of the human meaning that constitutes the studium (26). By contrast, the punctum functions like the photograph's subversive subconscious. The viewer does not choose to perceive the punctum but does so against his will: Barthes writes, "It is not I who seek it out (as I invest the field of the *studium* with my sovereign conscious), it is this element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me" (26). While "to recognize the studium is inevitably to encounter the photographer's intentions" (27), the punctum testifies to the weakness of the photographer's intended message and the power of the accidentally photographed objects to commandeer the viewer's attention. Just as Barthes asserts that the punctum is alien to the human viewer's "sovereign conscious," or subjectivity, Dalí characterizes the spool by "its pure and hard objectivity" (302). Indeed, perhaps the most important point of commonality between Barthes's concept of the punctum and Dalí's of the threadless spool is that both recognize the power of *things* to take control of a photograph. Like the spool—a seemingly meaningless piece of trash—Barthes's examples of punctums are nearly always small, quotidian objects: a pair of shoes, a shirt collar, a bandage on a finger. These insignificant objects, meant to serve as docile props to a human-centric message, nevertheless manage to undermine the intended focal point of the photograph.

Barthes's studium-punctum opposition is a useful point of reference for Dalí's analysis of the *Minotaure* photo because both men emphasize the idea that photography does not faithfully serve the interests of human subjects. On the contrary, photography bestows power upon the world of objects and weakens the elements of subjectivity that are traditionally at the center of an

artwork: artistic intention, cultural meaning, human emotion. Barthes writes that while the studium corresponds to the message the photographer intends his photograph to convey, the punctum does not "attest to the photographer's art; it says only that the photographer was there, or else, still more simply, that he could not *not* photograph the partial object [the punctum] at the same time as the total object [the studium]" (47). This statement highlights what Barthes sees as the passive role of the photographer: his task is simply to open the camera's shutter and allow the unblinking eye of the camera to catalogue all objects in the scene, no matter how small. And as we have seen, the concept of human passivity is at the center of Dalí's admiration of photography. In photography, the artist's hand ceases to intervene; the photograph documents without adding ornamentation; photography relies on inspiration from the outer world rather than on the artist's individual, subjective imagination. Dalí's analysis of the *Minotaure* photo, which asserts that the photograph shows more loyalty to the objective "world of facts" than to human desires, illustrates vividly and concretely the theory of photography he had put forth across so many essays in the late 1920s.

The *Minotaure* essay also elucidates some of the more enigmatic statements Dalí made about objectivity or art in general in his earlier essays. If we compare these statements to the ideas expressed in the *Minotaure* essay, it becomes clear that they are oblique references to photography. In "Els meus quadros," he asserts the superiority of his paintings by claiming that people are entranced by his paintings without knowing why, drawn to a detail of the painting that their conscious minds wish them to avoid: "El fet poètic […] l'emocionava subconscientment, malgrat de les enèrgiques protestes de la seva cultura i de la seva intel·ligència." This "poetic fact"[14] that overrides the objections of the viewer's intelligence and culture is essentially

[14] The term "poetic fact" also appears in Federico García Lorca's lecture "Un poeta en Nueva York," the talk with which he introduced his readings of the collection *Poeta en Nueva York* (1929–1930) upon his return to Spain. Lorca

identical to the threadless spool, which seizes the attention of the viewer against his will. Similarly, in "Realidad y sobrerealidad" Dalí describes a form of reality in which things escape "la absurda ordenación a que nuestra inteligencia las ha violentado" and reclaim their "consubstancial y peculiar manera de ser" (7). The role of the threadless spool in the *Minotaure* photo resembles this liberation of things that Dalí describes, as the spool frees itself from the subjective idea that it is insignificant and meaningless and asserts its true nature as the powerful punctum of the photograph. The image of the horse-drawn cart that Dalí presents in "Joan Miró," in which the subjective elements of the scene are rendered inert and the inanimate objects gain autonomy and life, is another instance of Dalí foreshadowing the theory of photography he would articulate in the *Minotaure* essay: in his analysis of the *Minotaure* photograph, all subjects—the photographer, the photographed people and the viewer—become passive or superfluous, while a small wooden object seems to come to life. Dalí ends the *Minotaure* essay by emphasizing the freedom and voice that photography grants to tiny, overlooked things: "These deplorably insignificant objects […] loudly trumpet their obvious physical reality" (306).

Dawn Adès has observed that Dalí was against the kind of naturalism "in which nature is filtered through the artist's temperament, with some degree of expressive gesture and the emphasis on individual perception of the external world"; the realism he admired was one of "objective exactitude" so precise that the artist seems to disappear (136). We have seen that, in the late 1920s, Dalí expressed this deeply held belief through the concept of photography. Photography as a medium—and its successor, cinema—embodied for Dalí the virtues of perfect realism, in which the subjective artist steps aside and lets the represented object speak for itself.

declares his poems to be "llenos de hecho poéticos" (124). Interestingly, there is significant overlap between the concept as employed by Dalí and by Lorca: the latter uses this term in the context of stating that his poems can only be understood by "[pidiendo] ayuda al duende, que es la única manera de que todos se enteren sin ayuda de inteligencia ni aparato crítico" (124). For Dalí as well as Lorca, the idea of a "poetic fact" stands in opposition to a cognitive, intellect-driven mode of thought.

As Arthur Terry notes, "Photography, for Dalí, represents the ultimate in objectivity" (212). Indeed, it is through the symbol of the camera that Dalí engaged with the values he most highly prized in art: the abolition of subjectivity and the liberation of objects from the meanings imposed on them by humans. His fervent, constant praise of photography reveals his devotion to the world of objects and disdain for human culture and the human mind.

II. The Catalan Anti-Art Movement

Although Dalí's vehement promotion of objectivity and campaign against subjectivity are distinctive in their intensity, his attitude on these issues was not unique. Rather, his ideas were born out of, and contributed significantly to, the anti-art movement that was active in Barcelona in the late 1920s. This movement, which was anchored in the journal *L'amic de les arts*, was devoted to attacking art that its members considered to be aligned with elements of subjectivity: the intellect, artistic intent and, above all, sentimentality. Their critique generally aimed to discredit art of the past and to create a fierce opposition between traditional art and the modern works of the avant-garde period. In the pages of *L'amic*, Dalí and his collaborators, the art critics Sebastià Gasch and Lluís Montanyà, maligned art that seemed to be a product of the nineteenth century and celebrated art that reflected the innovative, dynamic, capitalist spirit of the new century. In criticizing traditional art, the movement frequently made use of a term coined by Dalí that served as a catch-all insult for everything sentimental and old-fashioned: *putrefacte*. A *putrefacte* was a representative of the stuffy old order, someone who valued establishment intellectualism and romantic sentimentality.[15] As the term implies, a *putrefacte* was already in

[15] Given that Dalí most frequently used the term *putrefacte* to describe a rotting donkey, Adès argues that the concept of *putrefacte* was inspired by Dalí's violent dislike of Juan Ramón Jiménez's 1914 *Platero y yo*, a "gentle, sentimental story" about a man and his beloved donkey (139). The connection between *putrefacció* and Dalí's hatred of Jiménez's tale illustrates how the concept is rooted in a degradation of sentimentality. While Dalí was the clear leader of anti-*putrefacció* militancy, the idea was developed in conjunction with his friends from the Residencia de Estudiantes: Adès notes that "Dalí and Lorca planned to publish a *Book of Putrefaction*" (137), which never came to

the process of decaying, as nineteenth-century values ceded power to commodity worship and the age of the machine. Dalí, Gasch and Montanyà's movement dedicated itself to identifying and shaming *putrefactes* in the Catalan art scene and venerating those artists who embodied the anti-subjective spirit of modernity.

The attitude of the *L'amic*-based anti-art movement is vividly expressed in the group's most famous text: "Manifest groc," published in March 1928. The manifesto denounces the old-fashioned state of Catalan art—they decry the "tristíssim espectacle de la intel·lectualitat catalana d'avui, tancada en un ambient resclosit i putrefacte" (327)—and celebrates the fervor of industrial modernity that is sweeping the world: "EL MAQUINISME ha revolucionat el món." The targets of the manifesto's attack can be grouped together under the umbrella of traditional, subjective art: the Romantic writer Àngel Guimerà, the choral group l'Orfeó Català, the poet and representative of *modernisme* Joan Maragall. Echoing an argument Dalí had made repeatedly as he praised film and his own art, they declare that the superior "art of today" can be understood by people with no education: "Un sportman verge de nocions artístiques i de tota erudició està més a la vora i és més apte per a sentir l'art d'avui i la poesia d'avui, que no els intel·lectuals" (328). In contrast to the subjective art they condemn, they praise everything associated with industrialism, machines, commodity culture and modern spectacle. The nucleus of the manifesto is a list of modern phenomena—sports, jazz, cars, mannequins, modern art, gramophones—that implicitly represent a challenge to the *putrefacte* art of the Catalan establishment. Notably, photography and film feature prominently on this index: the list begins with "HI HA el cinema" and goes on to declare, "HI HA l'aparell de fotografiar, que és una […] petita màquina" (328–329). The manifesto's emphasis is on the anonymous, anti-sentimental nature of modern

fruition, and in 1928 Dalí and Luis Buñuel co-wrote an inflammatory letter to Jiménez in which they declared "¡¡MERDE!! para su *Platero y yo*" (qtd. in Sánchez Vidal, "Un chien andalou" 57).

phenomena, in opposition to the delicate individuality of subjective art. The representative of the anti-subjective spirit of the twentieth century is the "anonymous crowd" of the modern city: "UNA MULTITUD anònima —anti-artística— col·labora amb el seu esforç quotidià a l'afirmació de la nova època, tot i vivint d'acord amb el seu temps" (327).

The anti-subject, pro-object posture of the "Manifest groc" is highlighted by a criticism of the manifesto published in *L'amic de les arts* in April 1928, the month following the manifesto's release. The author of the article, A. Esclasans, calls the declarations of the manifesto "neurastènies objectivistes" and denounces the authors for promoting anti-subjective art: "La trinitat dels valors eterns, per damunt de maquinismes absurds, és aquesta: Déu, l'home i la dona. Tota la literatura, com tot l'art d'ençà que el món és món, parteix d'aquest triple camí de subjectivisme pur. […] És una condició imprescindible: Déu, l'home i la dona. Subjectivament a ultrança" (188). Esclasans's critique helps to illuminate the attitude that underlies Dalí, Gasch and Montanyà's text by identifying precisely what the manifesto rejects in traditional art: subjectivism, understood as a human-centered approach that celebrates humanity ("l'home i la dona") and man's spiritual, inner life ("Déu"). In a continuation of his article in the following issue of *L'amic*, Esclasans reiterates his earlier point: "Repetim-ho: Déu, l'home i la dona: però per dintre, per dintre, per dintre" (196). This statement is particularly elucidating because it emphasizes that subjective art requires the artist to look *inwardly*, toward his private mental and emotional landscape. Esclasans is correct that the authors of the "Manifest groc" are uninterested in art that privileges the experience of human subjects over the material world, or that focuses on the artist's inner life. On the contrary, the manifesto—along with other texts by members of the anti-art movement—suggests that in the industrial era, machine-made objects are superior to and more powerful than human beings. Rather than training their gazes inward, the members of this

movement follow Dalí's injunction, in "La fotografia, pura creació de l'esperit," to "obrir els ulls" and observe the wonders of the machine age.

In the spring of 1928, Dalí, Gasch and Montanyà published a pair of short essays celebrating two modern phenomena that are particularly representative of the spirit of the "Manifest groc": cinema and advertisements. The texts, titled the "guies sinòptiques," emphasize the anti-artistic, objective qualities of film and ads. The essay on cinema opens with the authors declaring that the medium is far from "una nova Bella Art" (175). Rather, "el cinema és, simplement, una indùstria." They go on to proclaim the total absence of subjective artistry in film, echoing several of Dalí's essays:

> El perfeccionament rapidíssim del cinema es produeix fora de tota intervenció personal, genial, artística. El perfeccionament del cinema obeeix a un procés netament i estrictament industrial i anònim. Les seves bellesa i poesia antiartístiques són un resultat d'estandardització absolutament paral·lel al de les altres indústries: l'auto, l'avió, el fonògraf, etc., etc.

As in Dalí's "Film-arte" essay, which asserted that true cinema involved the filmmaker repressing his individuality and entrusting his art to the camera, the authors of the "guies sinòptiques" characterize cinema as opposed to individualism, genius and artistry. They praise film for being "anonymous" and based in "absolute standardization," descriptions that highlight the absence of a thinking, feeling artist who infuses his work with artistic intent. Indeed, anonymity appears to be the central quality of cinema that appeals to the authors, as they declare that film is "anònim" three times in the short essay. Like Dalí's essay on Harry Langdon, the authors denounce those who have betrayed the anti-artistic nature of film by adulterating it with the sentimentality and individual expression of traditional art: "El film artístic està infestant, amb tots els gèrmens de la putrefacció artística, la pulsació pura i recent nascuda del cinema." They name the artistic filmmakers F.W. Murnau, Abel Gance and Fritz Lang as examples of this

putrefacció, and compare unfavorably the avant-garde artistry of "Man Ray, Chomette, Léger i seguidors" to "la pel·licula documentària, tipus Noticiari Fox." This glorification of documentary film as the apogee of cinema's anti-art potential prefigures Dalí's assertion, in the final issue of *L'amic,* that "una tendència violentament anti-artística resta definida en l'impuls exacerbat vers el documental" ("Revista de tendències anti-artístiques" 10).

The second "guia sinòptica," titled "L'ANUNCI COMERCIAL, PUBLICITAT, PROPAGANDA," praises advertisements in a similar vein as the authors' celebration of film: by opposing them to traditional art. In the first sentence of the essay, they declare, "L'anunci comercial ens produeix una emoció d'ordre infinitament superior a la que ens procuren els quilòmetres de pintura qualitativa que infesten els nostres salons" (184). This statement employs Dalí's frequent tactic of praising photography on the basis of its superiority to painting. Indeed, it quickly becomes clear that the authors' celebration of advertisements is in reality a celebration of photography: they clarify that they are praising "l'anunci estrictament comercial, anti-artístic, […] l'anunci que no tolera altra ornamentació que la fotografia sàviament disposada i exactament repartida." Here, they echo Dalí's "Poesia de l'util estandarditzat" (published in *L'amic* the previous month), which extolled ads that feature a simple photograph of shoes and denounced the "deplorable anunci en el qual hom ha intervingut artísticament!" (177). The "guia sinòptica" makes clear the authors' opposition to artistic advertisements, which, like art film, are governed by no laws other than "les fràgils regles de la fantasia i de la improvisació." This essay, like Dalí's many texts on photography, presents the camera as a neutral observer that transmits the image of a product without adding artistic ornamentation. As Robert Davidson notes, the second "guia sinòptica" suggests that "the camera is a witness but not an interpreter" (82). As we have seen, this concept is the nucleus of Dalí's attraction to photography.

Sebastià Gasch, in particular, held an attitude toward art that was conspicuously similar to that of Dalí. Gasch's essays tend to express the same contempt for subjective art and veneration of art forms in which the human element has been eclipsed, and he frequently makes use of the specific arguments that Dalí employs to praise photography and film. Gasch's "Vers la supressió de l'art," from the final issue of *L'amic*, laments the influence of subjective art in cinema in terms that recall essays of Dalí's like "Film-arte" and "Harry Langdon." Even worse than purely traditional art, writes Gasch, is "la influència que la idea artística exerceix encara" over the inherently anti-art medium of cinema, which becomes "una cosa híbrida i desnaturalitzada" (2). The recent work of Chaplin—"s'ha convertit en un Gran Artista, deliqüescent, sentimental i putrefacte"—is an example of this deplorable hybridity, as is "el cinema superrealista de Man Ray" (3). Gasch characterizes Ray's artistic films as "una horrible barreja. Hibridisme. Tan híbrid com el Cine Parlat" (3). He does not elaborate on this point, but the description of talking film as a "hybrid" of objectivity and subjectivity—in the same way that a surrealist film constitutes a cross-pollination of the anti-artistic medium of cinema with artistic intent—is striking. Perhaps Gasch views the presence of the human voice in film as an unacceptable expression of subjectivity, representing the inner world and individuality of the actor in a way that the photographic image does not. Elsewhere in the essay, he praises the "authentic lyricism" of industrial production on the basis of the total lack of will or intention motivating these creations: "Lirisme autèntic, perquè no és volgut. Perquè és involuntari" (2). Like Dalí's campaign against imagination, which reflects the intent of the artist, Gasch does not tolerate art that contains the presence of the human will.

Gasch's essay "Les girls" (*Mirador*, November 1930) similarly reinforces Dalí's concept of film as a medium in which subjects are transformed into objects. The essay begins with a

description of the American phenomenon of chorus girls, which Gasch celebrates for the lack of individuality and thing-like quality that the girls exhibit.[16] He goes on to declare that the chorus girls are to the music hall as Buster Keaton is to the cinema, and he applauds Keaton in exactly the same terms as Dalí's exaltation of Harry Langdon:

> Fa temps oposàvem Chaplin—l'expressió—a Buster Keaton—la plàstica—. […] Buster Keaton, fred, impassible, desinfectat i esterilitzat. Incolor, inodor i insípid: gairebé mineral. […] Buster Keaton: objecte impassiblement plàstic que s'enllaça amb la botella, amb el telèfon, amb el revòlver, objectes tan obsessionantment fotogènics com ell. […] Plasticitat absoluta, pura, crua, neta. Deshumanitzada.[17] (5)

In Dalí's ode to Langdon, he compares the actor to a water droplet falling involuntarily or a green bean plant unconsciously opening its leaves, and emphasizes the utter lack of volition that Langdon exhibits onscreen: "Harry Langdon és una coseta que es mou més inconscientment que les mateixes bestioles" (3). Likewise, Gasch presents Keaton as an example of the "involuntary lyricism" he celebrated in his earlier essay. When he appears in films, Keaton exists not as a conscious subject with an inner life but as an object, not different from the bottles, telephones and revolvers that surround him onscreen. Dalí and Gasch both present the actors they extol as embodiments of the true spirit of cinema. Thus, their comments are less tributes to the actors themselves than theoretical statements about the ideal form cinema takes when extraneous,

[16] Davidson points out the similarity between Gasch's assessment of the chorus line and that of Siegfried Kracauer in his 1927 essay "The Mass Ornament" (Davidson 96). Kracauer identifies the object-like character of the chorus girls, characterizing the onstage performers as "no longer individual girls but indissoluble girl clusters whose movements are demonstrations of mathematics" (Kracauer 75–76). (See Chapter Two for a more extensive discussion of "The Mass Ornament.") The difference between Kracauer's and Gasch's theories of the chorus girls is that while the former bemoans the girls' loss of individuality and reduction to objects, the latter celebrates the spectacle on precisely this basis.

[17] Gasch's celebration of Keaton echoes that of Buñuel in his essay "Deportista por amor" (1927): "En Buster Keaton la expresión es tan modesta como la de una botella. […] Escuela de Buster Keaton: escuela americana: vitalidad, fotogenia, ausencia de cultura y tradición novicia" (166–167). Both Gasch's and Buñuel's texts connect Keaton to *photogénie*, the French early cinema style that aimed to make familiar things (particularly the human body) appear foreign and strange; *photogénie* is discussed extensively in Chapter Two. Also, Gasch's description of Keaton as "deshumanitza[t]" may allude to José Ortega y Gasset's "La dehumanización del arte" (1924), which exhorted the modern artist to use stylization to strip human figures of the qualities and privileges normally associated with them. See Chapter Five for an exploration of the relevance of Ortega's essay to conceptions of the cinema in the Spanish avant-garde.

subjective influences are eliminated. “Les girls” ends with Gasch declaring the superiority of cinema to traditional art forms: film is “oposat a l’art anímic, netament psicològic i interior, art que voreja constantament el sentimentalisme putrefacte. […] L’art col·lectiu contra l’art individual. L’art general contra l’art particular” (5). In these closing statements are summarized the anti-subjective qualities that Gasch (echoing Dalí) admires in film: standardization, anti-individualism, anti-sentimentality, anti-interiority.

III. Contradictions

Dalí, along with his fellow-members of the Catalan anti-art movement, led a tireless campaign against art that revolved around the human subject. As we have seen, Dalí and his collaborators held in contempt any work of art that displayed the workings of an individual mind, that celebrated human culture or that contained a trace of sentimentality. The unique creativity of the artist has no place in the anti-art they promote, and neither do the culture, intelligence and emotions of the viewer. Their several manifesto-like texts would seem to constitute an unequivocal condemnation of subjectivity in art and a call for art that focuses exclusively on the object. Yet sprinkled throughout these texts are statements that blatantly contradict their rejection of subjectivity by positively valorizing the artist’s imagination and inner world. In an article in the last issue of *L’amic*, Montanyà asserts that in order to capture the “fet poètic,” it is necessary for the artist to make use of not only photography and film, but also “les exploracions automàtiques subconscients de l’individu” (“Punt i apart” 5). He reiterates this point by declaring that the purest artistic media are those that “ens donguin una visió objectiva de meravellosos paisatges interiors i d’estats espirituals inèdits.” Similarly, in early 1927 Gasch published an essay in *L’amic* in which he claims that in order to achieve the artistic intensity of Picasso—whom Gasch greatly admires—“cal viure una vida interior potentíssima” (“Salvador Dalí” 17).

This same essay contains a statement that is startling in its contradiction of Gasch's much-publicized opposition to artistic intent and imagination:

> Per al pintor hi ha coses molt més importants que les coses que veuen els nostres ulls. No perdem mai de vista que l'interessant és *crear* o *inventar*, i no pas *imitar*. Cal reintroduir dins la pintura el regnat de la imaginació que el naturalisme havia foragitat. (17)

Additionally, in a 1928 article celebrating Joan Miró for his objective approach to painting,[18] Gasch presents Miró's liberation of objects as synonymous with the liberation of his own subconscious: "Miró posa en estret contacte l'essencia de les coses amb la zona més profunda de la seva ànima" ("Joan Miró" 203). These statements introduce irreconcilable inconsistencies into the critics' attitude toward subjectivity in art, as they declare that a successful artist cultivates—rather than represses—his inner world.

These contradictions are even more glaring within Dalí's body of work. This is due both to the singularly emphatic nature of Dalí's denunciation of subjectivity and to the frequency with which he expresses a positive view of concepts he associates with subjectivity. Throughout his essays in the late 1920s, he communicates unambiguously his hatred for the agency of the artist; his desire is to efface the human actor completely in favor of freedom for the object. Alongside this argument, however, he also repeatedly presents in a positive light the very aspects of subjectivity he otherwise condemns: culturally determined thought; the instinct and the subconscious; emotion, spirit and poetry; genius and artistic intent. Just as Dalí employs the camera as a symbol of objectivity, his enigmatic celebration of subjectivity is generally communicated through statements about photography and film. Indeed, Dalí's contradictory attitude toward photography serves as an illustration of his deeply conflicted beliefs about

[18] Gasch praises Miró in the same terms as Dalí does, by declaring that Miró's paintings employ objective vision in order to liberate things from the arbitrary meanings imposed on them by humans: referring to Miró, he writes, "L'artista ha d'extreure la substància oculta de les coses, copsar l'esperit que viu dins la matèria, i expressar-lo en les seves obres" (202).

subjectivity, which (as we will see) would be visible in his work throughout his career. His inconsistent declarations about photography embody the antithetical arguments that the medium has always generated, as Marien notes: "Perhaps the outstanding characteristic of early notions of photography was the durability of the contradictions they accommodated" (xiii).[19] They also speak to the contradictory nature of Dalí's own work. Adès observes that while Dalí coined the word *putrefacte* to insult the old-fashioned sentimentality of artists and writers like Juan Ramón Jiménez, he later came to identify with the term, changing its meaning to that of *anti*-sentimentality: "The *putrefacte* here comes to represent its opposite, the clean objectivity of the non-sentimental, anti-putrefaction of Dalí's own ideas" (139–140). The blatant contradiction around the concept of *putrefacció* reflects, like photography, Dalí's inconsistent attitude toward subjectivity: is he in favor of the destruction or the liberation of the artist's inner world? Does he reject or celebrate concepts like imagination, emotion and individual desire? As Ara Merjian states, in the late 1920s Dalí was "suspended […] between purity and putrefaction" (127).

One of the most obvious ways in which Dalí's argument about photography contradicts itself is his repeated use of sentimental, traditionally artistic terms—poetry, emotion, spirit, lyricism—to describe the medium. His article that most succinctly expresses his association of photography with objectivity, "La fotografia, pura creació de l'esperit," indicates in the title that

[19] Batchen notes that early discourse on photography is marked by an inability to define the role of the artist in relation to the medium: statements by its inventors (Nicéphore Niépce, Louis Daguerre and Henry Fox Talbot) "acknowledge the crucial role that nature was thought to play in photography. At the same time they reveal a noticeable uncertainty as to what exactly this role entails. Is nature painted by photography or being induced to paint herself? If she produced by or a producer of photography?" (63). Similarly, Richard Abel recounts how the first International Congress of the Cinématographe, in 1911, was filled with debates on whether film could be considered an art, and if so, who or what was the artist: "One position, which had already been used against photography, assumed that sunlight, the mechanical operation of the camera, and the chemical processes of the laboratory were the sole agents of production in a film. The other argued that 'the thought, taste, and feeling' of a number of individuals (scriptwriter, director, cameraman, and actors) controlled and directed that process of production. Film, therefore, was a construction of the mind and imagination, much like the work of the painter or musician" ("Before the Canon" 18). These polemics, which center on the question of the artist's passivity or agency in the photographic and cinematographic processes, find renewed expression in Dalí's contradictory body of work about photography and film.

he believes photography to be a product of the "spirit." Within the article, he calls the camera lens a "vidre d'autèntica poesia" (90), exalts "[la] fantasia fotogràfica" (91) and declares that photography captures "la poesia més subtil i incontrolable" (91). He reiterates this description of photography as inherently poetic in several other essays, announcing in "La dada fotogràfica," for example, that photography "és encara i ESSENCIALMENT, EL VEHICLE MÉS SEGUR DE LA POESIA" (40).[20] In "Realidad y sobrerealidad," Dalí describes the objective reality that photography accesses as "la realidad que sólo puede ser cobtada por vía del espíritu" and declares, "Nos es inadmisible toda actividad que no tienda al conocimiento poético de la realidad" (7). These statements align photography not with the objective, unthinking "world of facts" but with the human capacity to appreciate beauty and fantasy. Whereas elsewhere Dalí presents photography as radical precisely for its exclusion of the human, its externality to human concerns, here he celebrates the medium on the basis of its talent for poetry—the specifically human art form par excellence.

Similarly, the equivalence that Dalí frequently draws between photography and certain paintings undermines his presentation of photography as the foremost example of anti-art. As we have seen, his assertion in the "Film-arte" essay that film and painting are opposed—"El mundo del cine y el de la pintura son bien distintos: precisamente las posibilidades de la fotografía y del cinema están en esta ilimitada fantasía que nace de las cosas mismas"—is contradicted by his essays on his own paintings and those of Miró. Both of these essays contend that the genius of the painters in question lies in their ability to access "the fantasy born of things themselves," that is, to perform the same task as the camera. This blurring of the distinction between painting and

[20] In his 1925 essay "Desde la ribera oscura: Sobre una estética del cine" (discussed in Chapter Four), Fernando Vela alludes similarly to the idea that film's capacity for poetic expression lies not with the human filmmaker but with the technical device of the camera: he describes cinema as an "arte objetivo" in which "desaparece la subjetividad del autor" (227) while also stating that "los mismos instrumentos físicos del cine—antes de intervenir los actores, el autor, un argumento—contienen un poder elemental de poetización" (217).

photography weakens Dalí's use of the camera as a symbol of the anti-art movement. Indeed, the positive valorization of painting challenges his very membership in said movement. In "Realidad y sobrerealidad," he declares, "Hoy la poesía está en manos de los pintores"—a statement that is a contradiction of his ideas both because it praises painting and because it runs counter to his oft-repeated assertion that photography is the only truly poetic medium of his day. It would seem that as a painter himself (and an egomaniacal one at that), Dalí was unable to live up to the statements he and his collaborators made calling for the abolition of art.[21] His celebration of painting, in direct contradiction of the premise of his anti-art movement, indicates his unwillingness to include himself in the human element that photography was rendering irrelevant.

Dalí's presentation of film as aligned with the masses is in conflict with his insistence that photography and cinema are alien to any collective mode of human thought. In "Film-arte," he praises anti-artistic cinema on the basis of its universality, its comprehensibility for all moviegoers: the emotions and images of anti-art film are "completamente definidas y claras en el concepto común de los miles de gentes que forman los grandes públicos cinemáticos" (226). This type of cinema is "un perfeccionamento logrado por el camino de estandartización." Here, he suggests that there is an innate, natural connection between the filmic image and the minds of the masses; when the filmmaker ceases to intervene and entrusts his art to the unconscious workings of the camera, the resulting image is immediately legible and meaningful to the average viewer. Yet when describing the power of photography to liberate and empower objects, as in the *Minotaure* photo, Dalí emphasizes that photography evades human meaning entirely. In "Nous limits de la pintura" he describes the moment in which things reclaim their true,

[21] These statements include Dalí's fervent pronouncement in May 1928, "¡¡Assasinat de l'art, quin més bell elogi!!" ("Nous limits de la pintura," *L'amic* 25, 195), and Gasch's condemnation, in "Vers la supressió de l'art" of "ço que és pitjor, ART, ART, ART" (3).

individual qualities as "el moment en què les coses s'han isolat del convingut" (186)—the instant in which they break free of the conventional meaning normally imposed on them by humans. Similarly, in "Realidad y sobrerealidad" he celebrates the power of things to escape "la absurda ordenación a que nuestra inteligencia las ha violentado, transmutando su valor real por otro estrictamente convencional." Once again, he attacks the concept of "convention" and asserts that the destruction of conventional meaning is necessary in order for objects to gain freedom. Though the above-cited statements do not explicitly mention photography, we can infer that they are allusions to the medium, given Dalí's theory that photography enables the liberation of things and the cessation of their subordination to human values. Thus, a contradiction emerges between his declarations that the photographic or cinematic image is opposed to "convention" yet also aligned with "standardization." Dalí appears to vacillate between condemning and celebrating universally human norms, ideas and emotions.

Dalí likewise undermines his theory of photography as alien to subjectivity by suggesting that photography's liberation of the object is simultaneously a liberation of human desires. While describing the photography-like freeing of the object that occurs in the work of avant-garde painters like Miró and Max Ernst, Dalí writes that the moment in which "els fets […] adquireixen el màxim gust de la llum" is also the moment in which "les nostres veritats individuals" are revealed ("Nous limits de la pintura," *L'amic* 24, 186). Rather than opposing the objective world of facts to the subjective world of "our individual truths," he presents these two spheres as aligned. Media that grant freedom and visibility to objects—such as photography, film and the paintings of artists like Miró—also liberate the human artist's repressed desires. He continues this line of thought in "Realidad y sobrerealidad" by declaring that in the true form of reality—the objective reality that photography accesses—"lo que nos habíamos ocultado desear

y lo que ignorábamos habernos ocultado toma el máximo gusto de la luz" (7). Whereas elsewhere Dalí fervently celebrates the idea of an objective reality precisely for its total exclusion of the human, here he implies that such a reality is in fact at the service of the human mind. In the same essay, he asserts that the "espíritu de la realidad misma," while incomprehensible to the cultural part of the mind, is "cognoscitiv[o] en absoluto por nuestro instinto." This echoes his description, in "Poesia de l'útil standarditzat," of the industrially produced object as "afalagador dels més salvatges i rudimentaris instints" (177). These statements present human instincts and repressed desires as allied with objective reality and the objective realm of things, which Dalí yearns to empower. Thus, they constitute positive valorizations of the subconscious. This is a contradiction of the disdain he expresses in "La fotografia, pura creació de l'esperit" for "els tèrbols processos subconscients" (91) and "allò que som capaços de somniar" (90). Indeed, Dalí's collection of essays on photography as a whole clearly indicate that he believes photography—and the world of objects—to be diametrically opposed to any element of human subjectivity, including the subconscious. It is on this basis that he constantly exhorts artists to train their gazes outward and mimic the open eye of the camera; a closed eye, which looks inwardly toward the artist's subconscious, represents for Dalí the epitome of contemptible *putrefacte* art. It is thus shocking that he concludes the "Film-arte" essay with a declaration that unambiguously celebrates such an introspective gaze and associates said gaze with the camera: "El mejor cine es aquel que puede percibirse con los ojos cerrados" (229).

Dalí's waffling attitude toward the subconscious—does he value or reject it? Is it a representative of the subjective or objective world?—is often expressed through his contradictory stance toward surrealism, given that movement's dedication to liberating the

subconscious. Echoing his dismissal of dreams and the subconscious in "La fotografia," he announces in "Els meus quadros" that his passion for objective reality and "seeing well" should be "més que suficient per a fer veure la distància que em separa del superrealisme." Here, he opposes surrealism's interest in the human mind to his own interest in the world of objects. Yet in "Nous limits de la pintura" he suggests that surrealism is in fact conducive to the liberation of objects he so desires: with surrealism "s'inicià l'autonomia poètica de les coses" (167). Statements such as this one and those that align the instinct with objective reality serve to blur the lines between the subjective, inner world of human beings and the objective world of facts and objects. Rather than figure these two worlds as enemies, each striving to overpower the other, Dalí indicates that they may exist harmoniously. What is more, he declares photography to support this symbiotic intermingling of objective reality and subjective surreality: "Nada más favorable a las osmosis que se establecen entre la realidad y la sobrerealidad que la fotografia" ("Realidad y sobrerealidad" 7).[22] This declaration, by presenting photography as the servant of both objective and subjective reality, runs counter to his thesis that the camera is a pure symbol of the objective.

Perhaps the most central element of Dalí's theory of photography is his belief that the photograph reveals the world as it truly is by stripping away the "intervention" of the artist's subjectivity. To his mind, traditional art distorts reality in order to make it reflect the artist's emotions and fantasies; the camera, by contrast, is loyal only to the material world. Dalí is emphatic that the superiority of photography lies in its passivity—we can recall, for example, his contention that inspiration, and not imagination, should be the only guiding force in art. Yet even this most fundamental of his assertions is contradicted in his strangely incoherent body of work.

[22] Dalí reiterates this sentiment in "La dada fotogràfica": "La dada fotogràfica […] és […] el procés més àgil per a la captació de les més delicades osmosis que s'estableixen entre la realitat i la super-realitat" (40).

In “Realidad y sobrerealidad,” he writes, “El dato fotográfico está siendo […] una constante revisión del mundo exterior, cada vez más objeto de duda” (7). This statement, by declaring that photography *revises* the external world, goes against his well-established thesis that the medium *reveals* objective reality. In the *Minotaure* essay and other texts, Dalí presents photography as a force that is radical not in what it adds to reality but in what it removes. By eliminating the intervention of the artist’s subjectivity, which usually stands between the viewer and the represented scene like a paper screen, photography presents a radically unaltered picture of the objective world. Here, however, he declares that photography undermines objective reality—which is increasingly “subject to doubt”—and grants power to the vision of an individual artist, who imposes his personal view of reality on the outer world. The presence of this contradiction raises the question of which, in Dalí’s view, is the superfluous element that photography removes: objective reality or the artist’s idiosyncratic inner world of obsessions and desires?

The many contradictions in Dalí’s work around the relationship between photography and subjectivity all center on the presence or absence of the human in art. The vast majority of his declarations about photography celebrate the medium for being fundamentally alien to human concerns; the photograph, he makes clear, is to be worshipped because it is the first art form that excludes the human. However, as we have seen, his essays also contain several statements that associate photography with the human mind: the subconscious; poetry and fantasy; desire and instinct. In particular, Dalí insists on aligning the medium with the elements of the mind that deal with bizarre individuality, a person’s perverse and unique inner world—the very zone of the mind that is especially robust in Dalí and accounts for the excellent strangeness of his paintings. Likewise, his embrace of painting, which runs counter to his assertion that photography renders painting irrelevant, serves to defend his own role as an artist. It would seem that what these

contradictions reveal is Dalí's inability to advocate wholeheartedly for the elimination of the human agent—himself—in art.

Other avant-garde artists struggled with the same dilemma as Dalí regarding the tension between objectivity and subjectivity in art. Should the artist impose his individual genius on the artwork, or render himself merely a passive receptacle for inspiration from the outer world? Is art that reflects one's inner world a product of the conservative nineteenth century or the radical twentieth? Others members of the avant-garde movements of the 1920s asked themselves these questions,[23] but, unlike Dalí, most were inclined much more toward individual expression than objectivity. Jorge Luis Borges's "Manifiesto del Ultra" (1921) is representative of the attitude of much of the avant-garde:

> Existen dos estéticas: la estética pasiva de los espejos y la estética activa de los prismas. Guiado por la primera, el arte se transforma en una copia de la objetividad del medio ambiente. […] Guiado por la segunda, el arte se redime, hace del mundo su instrumento, y forja […] su visión personal. (N.p.)

Borges's opposition between "prisms" and "mirrors" resembles Dalí's opposition between imagination—"intervenció, acció"—and inspiration—"allò involuntari" ("Revista de tendències anti-artístiques" 10). Both men distinguish between a passive impulse in art, one that strives merely to reflect the outer world, and an active, creative impulse that drives the artist to impose his personal vision on the world. Yet while Dalí declares himself to be in favor of passive inspiration, Borges places himself firmly in the camp of prisms: the prerogative of his movement "es crear […] hasta arquitectar cada uno de nosostros su creación subjetiva." In a subsequent Ultra manifesto ("Anatomía de mi 'Ultra,'" 1921), Borges articulates a second opposition that similarly distinguishes between passive and active art: the two poles of artistic motivation are "el

[23] As Juan Herrero-Senés notes, many Spanish avant-garde artists "were mimetic and anti-mimetic, subjective and objective. It seemed that, on the one hand, they led to an extreme relativistic subjectivism (even on the verge of solipsism), but that on the other hand they also aimed for some kind of objectivity" (52–53).

polo impresionista y el polo expresionista. En el primero, el individuo se abandona al ambiente; en el segundo, el ambiente es el instrumento del individuo" (n.p.). The oppositions Borges draws between mirrors and prisms and between impressionist and expressionist art are a useful tool for understanding the contradictory attitudes within Dalí's theory of photography. On the one hand, he exhorts the artist to be a mirror that "abandons himself to his environment," and he glorifies the camera as a symbol of this passivity. On the other hand, he occasionally praises artists who are prisms, making the world an "instrument" for their personal expression, and suggests that the camera embodies this power to revise the world.

André Breton's first "Manifesto of Surrealism" (1924) expresses similarly contradictory ideas about the relationship between the artwork and the artist's personal vision. At certain points in the manifesto, he presents the surrealist artist as a passive receptacle for inspiration, with no individual genius. The surrealists, he writes, "have made ourselves into simple receptacles of so many echoes, modest *recording instruments*. […] You might as well speak of the talent of this platinum ruler, this mirror, this door, and of the sky, if you like. We do not have any talent" (27–28). This statement suggests that the surrealist artist strives to be, to use Borges's term, a mirror. However, the nucleus of the manifesto lies in Breton's emphasis on the opposite impulse: active creation, individual vision, imagination. He declares his pure hatred of realism because "the author's ambition is severely circumscribed" (7), exalts the fact that, thanks to Freud, "the imagination is perhaps on the point of reasserting itself, of reclaiming its rights" (10) and advocates for giving more credence to one's inner world than to objective reality: "Why should I not grant to dreams what I occasionally refuse reality, that is, this value of certainty?" (12). On the whole, Breton's surrealism was a movement dedicated to individuality, genius and the expression of one's interior landscape; the very concept of "surreality" denotes the existence

of a subjective, individual version of reality that is superior to the objective reality of the material world. Dalí, who briefly entered the surrealist movement around 1929, struggled to reconcile his devotion to objectivity with surrealism's obvious proclivities for subjectivism. (In an introductory bulletin to the final issue of *L'amic de les arts*, he praises surrealism for being "anti-imaginatiu" [1], a descriptor that clearly contradicts Breton's statements about the movement.) Indeed, Dalí's contradictory attitude toward the presence of subjectivity in art during the late 1920s can partly be understood as the product of his conflicted relationship with surrealism at the time.

IV. Subjectivity, Objectivity and Paranoid Criticism

The contradictions within Dalí's theory of photography boil down to a tension between the painter's passion for annihilating subjectivity in favor of the liberation of objects and his desire to give rein to his own individual genius. The majority of his essays on photography, which celebrate the medium as a tool for achieving the triumph of the objective, reflect his impulse toward objectivity. The few texts that align photography with individual expression—and the sporadic statements that undermine the theses of his essays by associating photography with subjectivity—are indicative of the opposite impulse within Dalí: that of glorifying one's unique interior world and declaring the superiority of this world over objective reality. Dalí continued to struggle with this irresolvable tension throughout his life, later expressing these same contradictions through his theory of Paranoid Criticism.[24] If we compare his essays on photography to his treatises on Paranoid Criticism, it becomes clear that his conflicted attitude

[24] As I will demonstrate, Dalí describes Paranoid Criticism in contradictory and enigmatic ways, and thus it is difficult to provide a succinct definition of the method. However, in essence it is a means of assigning an alternative meaning to an image in such a way that the conventional or rational understanding of the image is undermined. While Dalí often presents Paranoid Criticism as a form of art interpretation—a way of accessing the "true meaning" of an artwork—he also employs it as a means of perception in general, using the Paranoid-Critical method to see the world in a new, radical and more correct way.

toward photography was a precursor to his equally contradictory theory of art and perception. Just as Dalí tried to portray photography as both anti-artistic and poetic, ignorant of the human subconscious and aligned with the artist's repressed desires, alien to collective human thought and allied with the masses, he would suggest that Paranoid Criticism allows objective reality, cultural norms and an individual's irrational beliefs to coincide. In his essays on photography and those on Paranoid Criticism, Dalí seems to argue for both the destruction and the triumph of subjectivity.

The *Minotaure* essay is particularly illustrative of the connection between Dalí's theories of photography and Paranoid Criticism because he explicitly presents his analysis of the photograph as an example of his theory of art criticism. The essay opens with an epigraph defining Paranoid Criticism: "Paranoid-Critical Activity: A spontaneous method of irrational knowledge based on the interpretative-critical association of delirious phenomena" (302). After explaining the role of the threadless spool in upending the human-centric meaning of the photograph, he declares, "It is on it"—the spool—"that I have just exercised my method known by the name of 'paranoid-critical activity'" (302). As we have seen, the *Minotaure* essay is a perfect distillation of Dalí's argument in favor of objectivity. In his analysis of the photograph, all human agents—the people being photographed, the photographer and the viewer—are rendered passive and superfluous. The subjective meaning they attempt to assign to the scene, which privileges the emotions provoked by the suspicious trio, is proven to be irrelevant. By contrast, the spool, a small object that "loudly trumpets [its] obvious physical reality" (306), is granted enormous power, as it now contains the entire meaning of the photograph. The method by which Dalí analyzes the *Minotaure* photo entails eliminating the subjective factors in the image in order to allow the objective truth of the photograph—the centrality of the spool—to be

revealed. In order for the viewer to understand the true meaning of the photograph, he must repress his intelligence, emotions and culture and permit the photograph to impose its meaning on him; in Barthes's terms, he must cease to concentrate on the studium and surrender himself to the punctum, which "rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me" (26). Since Dalí declares this method of interpreting the photograph to be an example of Paranoid Criticism, in this instance he presents Paranoid Criticism as rooted in objectivity. He suggests that Paranoid Criticism requires the human viewer to turn off his capacity for subjective interpretation—both individual and cultural—and subordinate himself to objective reality.

However, this description of Paranoid Criticism directly contradicts an essay Dalí had written about the method five years earlier, in 1930. "The Rotting Donkey" (originally published in French) unambiguously presents Paranoid Criticism as a means of undermining objective reality and achieving the triumph of an individual's bizarre inner world. Dalí exalts the potential of his method to render the objective world irrelevant: "I believe the moment is drawing near when, by a thought process of a paranoiac and active character, it would be possible […] to […] contribute to a total discrediting of the world of reality" (223). The contrast between this celebration of an "active," creative mind and his earlier disdain for imagination is striking. He goes on to declare that Paranoid Criticism causes objective reality to be subordinate to an individual's subjective experience of reality:

> Paranoia makes use of the external world in order to set off its obsessive idea, with the disturbing characteristic of verifying the reality of this idea for others. The reality of the external world serves as an illustration and proof, and is placed thus at the service of the reality of our mind. (223)

Rather than exhorting the reader to repress his subjectivity and strive for objectivity, Dalí praises the paranoiac's ability to mold external reality to the contours of his idiosyncratic mind. The paranoiac—of which Dalí himself is the preeminent example—believes so strongly in the power

of his interior world that the exterior world comes to mimic his subjective reality. In other words, Paranoid Criticism causes an individual's subjective world to *replace* the objective world; "objectivity" here denotes not the "world of facts" that he so praises in his essays on photography but the exact opposite: the interior, subjective world of a human being. He states that while the paranoiac forms his version of reality by "taking advantage of associations and facts so refined as to escape normal people" (223), the new reality he creates "will soon be […] recognizable by all, as soon as the paranoiac will simply indicate" it (224). Paranoid Criticism is presented in this essay as the power of an individual to revise objective reality to his liking.[25] It corresponds to his description of photography in "Realidad y sobrerealidad": "El dato fotográfico está siendo […] una constante revisión del mundo exterior, cada vez más objeto de duda" (7).

The most famous example of Paranoid Criticism involves Jean-François Millet's 1859 painting *L'Angélus*, which Dalí returned to many times as the quintessential object of his method. The painting depicts a bucolic scene of a peasant couple praying together in their field at the end of the day: the man stands with his head bowed and his hat held in his hands, while the woman inclines slightly and prays with her palms pressed together. Dalí, who had looked at the picture frequently throughout his childhood and developed a lifelong obsession around it, saw the painting as an allegory of sexual anxiety. In his viewing, the man's hat covers an erection, and his bowed head indicates shame at his arousal. He interprets the woman's pressed-together hands as a stance of attack: she is a praying mantis figure, representing the threat of the woman

[25] As we have seen, Dalí's disagreements with surrealism frequently centered on the subjective, creative, individualistic nature of Breton's movement; Dalí, unlike Breton, valued the passivity of the artist in service of objectivity. We can recall, for example, his attempt to reconcile his engagement with the movement by labeling it "anti-imaginatiu" ("Introductory Bulletin" 1). Yet Paranoid Criticism actually responds to Dalí's desire to be *more* actively imaginative than Breton. Adès notes that "Dalí introduced his notion of paranoia as an active force to oppose the passivity of automatism" (157). Jordana Mendelson agrees: "Unlike dreamwork or automatism, the paranoiac-critical method was based on an active relationship with the world" (190).

who devours her mate after copulation.[26] Paranoid Criticism serves to nullify the conventional interpretation of the painting as an innocent religious scene, as Dalí insists that the alternative meaning he attributes to the work—that of the macabre synthesis of sex and death—is the painting's true content. He claims that one day in 1932 the picture's meaning was suddenly revealed to him: "I understood, I saw very clearly 'what it was all about'" ("The Tragic Myth" 283).

Dalí gives a number of contradictory explanations for his knowledge of the alternative meaning of the painting. In several places he describes the painting as inherently "paranoiac," suggesting that he as an individual performs no special act of interpretation other than seeing the work clearly and objectively: the painting is "charged with such latent intentionality" that understanding it is simply a matter of allowing these intentions to make themselves visible (288). In this way, his interpretation of *L'Angélus* accords with his description of the *Minotaure* photo. In both cases, the Paranoid-Critical understanding of the image—the centrality of the threadless spool and the morbidly sexual nature of the bucolic scene—resides in the image itself rather than in the mind of the viewer. The interpretation is thus presented as objective rather than subjective. Yet Dalí also makes clear that his understanding of the painting is a product of his personal obsessions and neuroses. He states that he sees the man "as if being latently dead" because he himself experienced strong tendencies toward the death drive: "This impression can only be linked to my identification with the said character" (296). Here, Paranoid Criticism appears the way Dalí presents it in "The Rotting Donkey," as a way for the viewer to impose his highly subjective associations and fantasies onto objective reality.[27] In other places, Dalí justifies his

[26] Dalí, "Millet's *L'Angélus*" 280–281.
[27] In his essay on *L'Angélus*, Dalí also reiterates his bold claim from "The Rotting Donkey" that Paranoid Criticism makes objective reality conform to an individual's subjective interpretation: it is through a change in "the point of

Paranoid-Critical interpretation by asserting that many other people share his instinctive understanding of the painting. He details a fantasy of his that involves plunging *L'Angélus* lengthwise into a bucket of milk so that half of the painting is submerged. In his mind, it is clear that the part of the painting containing the male figure is the half that gets wet, and when he describes the fantasy to a number of his friends and colleagues, he is pleased to find that others imagine the man being submerged as well: "Gala, Breton, Lacan, Buñuel, Giacometti, Colle could not conceive of the partial immersion of the painting other than with the man being the character soaked in the milk" (286). The fact that Dalí believes that his interpretation of the painting is bolstered by other people sharing his impression indicates that there is a third definition of Paranoid Criticism. In addition to describing the method as purely objective and as the product of an individual mind, he presents Paranoid Criticism as emanating from a kind of collective subconscious.

Haim Finkelstein has succinctly summed up the contradictions present in Dalí's formulation of Paranoid Criticism in relation to *L'Angélus*:

> This feat of paranoiac-critical interpretation is fraught with serious conceptual and methodological problems, since it is precariously situated between the objective and personal spheres. The first, based on the assertion of the objective validity of its findings, implies that the painting is a sublimated expression of repressed sexual anxieties, and that this latent content of the painting is, at least to some extent, what Millet unconsciously introduced into it. Dalí also took pains to prove, by invoking popular-culture phenomena, that the painting's unconscious material also possessed a universal dimension.[28] The personal dimension implies that it was Dalí himself who brought the whole interpretative system into being, since it was derived from his own living experience, and was thoroughly colored by his own obsessions, childhood recollections, and adult relationships, and since the various other associative links were all forged within the framework of chance encounters and coincidences experienced by him alone. (276)

view of the subject […] that it is possible […] to *objectify* a complete transformation" of the image in question (288, emphasis mine).

[28] As Mendelson notes, "It was through its multiple appearances in nature and culture that *The Angelus* revealed to Dalí its 'hidden' significance as a universal myth" (197).

Finkelstein observes that Dalí initially presents Paranoid Criticism as a mode of objective vision—"seeing well," as Dalí put it in his essays on photography—but contradicts himself by describing the method as a highly subjective form of imagination: Paranoid Criticism "shows itself not so much as an instrument for unraveling objective truth but, rather, as a mental construction forming a truth all its own" (276). Similarly, Robin Greeley states, "Paranoid imagery […] undermines rationalist differentiations between objective and subjective reality" (61). Indeed, by suggesting that his interpretation of Millet's painting is simultaneously the objective content of the work, the expression of his personal obsessions and the product of a collective human (or cultural) subconscious, Dalí implies that objective reality, the inner world of an individual and the desires shared unconsciously by all are one and the same. The problem with this confluence is that, as we have seen, Dalí took great pains throughout his written work to distinguish objective reality from subjective reality, and to declare that the material "world of facts" was the only world in which a radical, non-*putrefacte* artist such as himself could be interested.

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The inconsistencies from which Dalí's theory of Paranoid Criticism suffers echo the contradictions that pepper his essays on photography. Both Paranoid Criticism and photography exist for Dalí as alternate means of seeing the world, and each embodies various mutually exclusive concepts of vision. He presents Paranoid Criticism as an objective form of neutral vision, as a means for the individual to see nothing but the bizarre landscape of his inner world, and as a mode of seeing that makes visible the fantasies of a collective subconscious. His theory of photography, similarly, emphasizes the anti-subjective nature of the camera while occasionally stating that photography is aligned with human emotion and strives for the

liberation of human desires. In other words, for Dalí photography is a form of vision that excludes the human subject, yet it is also one that peers into the subject's subconscious. The topic of photography and film was a means for Dalí to express two of his deeply held—and incompatible—beliefs. On the one hand, he had a passion for objectivity, which can also be described as an intense hatred of subjectivity: a disgust for the emotions, desires, dreams and elements of culture that constitute the human mind. On the other hand, he was deeply interested in the strange contours of his own mind, and did not wish to eradicate his individuality in service of the triumph of the objective. The idea of photography allowed Dalí to merge his devotion to objectivity and subjectivity, all while declaring that the two were irreconcilable. In the later years of his career, Paranoid Criticism would serve the same purpose.

Mendelson observes that "Dalí brought together conflicting modes of representation: the supposed realistic objectivity of photography and the interpretative gestures of the avant-garde" (194). Indeed, through his theory of photography Dalí fuses the imaginative impulse typical of the avant-garde with the promotion of a medium whose greatness lies in its rejection of imagination. His first essay on photography articulates a sentiment that he would reiterate several times in subsequent texts: "Saber mirar és una mena d'inventar."[29] Though this declaration appears at first glance simply to celebrate the artistic potential of photography, when considered carefully it reveals itself to encapsulate the contradictions present in his theory of the medium. Dalí extols photography for its neutral vision—its unparalleled ability to "see well"—precisely because this entails the absence of any form of creative intervention. Yet in the same breath, he aligns photography with the power to perform the eminently artistic task of invention, or imagination. The camera exists in Dalí's writings as a symbol of the two antithetical poles of artistic representation: objective vision and subjective vision, mirrors and prisms, the

[29] "La fotografia, pura creació de l'esperit" 90–91.

impressionist gesture and the expressionist gesture. His employment of photography as a symbol of these contradictory impulses indicates neither a harmonious marriage of the two poles nor a negation of their opposition. Rather, it speaks to a conflict within Dalí that would never be resolved. It is the unending tension between objectivity and subjectivity—and his irrevocable attraction to both—that made photography such a rich topic for Dalí to mine again and again.

Chapter Two

The Shattered Star: The Close-Up as Dehumanizing Force in the Avant-Garde Prose of Francisco Ayala

"If cinema magnifies feeling, it magnifies it in every way. Its pleasure is more pleasurable, but its defects are more glaring."
Jean Epstein, "Magnification," 1921

Francisco Ayala's 1928 short story "Polar, estrella" dramatizes the emotional effects—both positive and negative—of the cinematic close-up on the enraptured spectator. The story centers on a man whose obsession with a film star is nourished by sumptuous close-ups of the star, which the protagonist devours at every opportunity. The close-up, however, is also the agent of the protagonist's most horrific disillusion. A key scene describes a screening of one of the star's films in which a glitch in the projector causes the screen to be split between two close-up images of the star, so that her body parts are grotesquely rearranged. The dispersal of the star's body dissolves the illusion of her presence for the protagonist: he can no longer experience her films as instances of direct, personal communion with the object of his desire. "Polar, estrella" illustrates vividly the paradox of the close-up that was experienced by many early moviegoers. By enlarging certain body parts (especially the face), the close-up created an illusion of the star's intense proximity and of the spectator's intimacy with him or her. But this sensation of closeness came at the price of disrupting the continuity of the star's body: while individual body parts seemed to be brought closer, the star herself was made less present, as she was transformed from a whole person into an amalgamation of independent, object-like body parts. Ayala's story

emphasizes the highly disturbing effect that this image of anatomical fragmentation can have on the spectator, as the shattering of the star's body causes the protagonist to realize the unbearable truth of her absence from him.

While "Polar, estrella" is one of Ayala's few texts that centers directly on the experience of film-watching, the broader influence of film on his avant-garde prose is undeniable. Criticism on Ayala's collections from the avant-garde period, *El boxeador y un ángel* (1929) and *Cazador en el alba* (1930), has observed that the author frequently incorporates cinematic techniques into his narratives, from slow motion to camera panning to cinematic framing. In particular, several critics have noted that Ayala adapts the technique of close-up for literature by describing characters' bodies through a series of images of isolated body parts. These descriptions mimic cinematic close-up by refraining from presenting the characters' bodies in full and by personifying body parts so that they appear as autonomous entities. However, criticism has thus far been limited to identifying the existence of the technique of literary close-up in Ayala's prose and concluding that its presence is indicative of his interest in the cinema; the specific effect to which the technique is employed has largely gone unexplored. This chapter will examine the emotions associated with Ayala's use of descriptive close-up in his avant-garde collections. I will argue that he employs literary close-up in conjunction with one of the predominant themes of these collections: the alienation experienced by the inhabitant of the modern metropolis. Just as the protagonist of "Polar, estrella" is haunted by the knowledge of his star's absence and falseness after witnessing her body splintered into fragments, in Ayala's other stories the use of literary close-up is correlated with the sense that the person described in this fragmentary manner is unreachable and object-like. In several texts from *El boxeador y un ángel* and *Cazador en el alba*, a body presented through close-up is reduced to a collection of abstract parts that act

autonomously and are unconnected to the subjectivity of the body's owner. Ayala suggests that the close-up, while furnishing an illusion of intimacy, is a vehicle of dehumanization.

I. "Polar, estrella"

In the late 1920s, the close-up had not yet become what it is for film and television viewers today—a technique so frequently employed and smoothly integrated that it is essentially invisible, functioning as a neutral lens through which the spectator accesses the onscreen world. "Polar, estrella" reflects the early moviegoer's experience of the close-up as a radical and potent phenomenon, demonstrating with equal intensity the eroticism of enlarged, richly detailed images of a desired star's body and the emotional disturbance caused by images of anatomical fragmentation. The object of the protagonist's obsession is a beautiful and famous film star clearly modeled on Greta Garbo—the star, Polar, is described as an "estrella escandinava" (Ayala, *Narrativa completa* 287)—and the narration emphasizes the magnetism that Polar, like Garbo, exerts over her fans. The protagonist feeds his obsession with Polar by seeking out her image in advertisements and segments of film stock, and his excitement and arousal when viewing one of her close-up-laden films is extreme. The intensity of his pleasure when presented with images that communicate Polar's proximity and abundance is matched by the violence of his reaction to seeing her body shattered and dispersed: shortly after the incident with the projector glitch, the protagonist commits suicide. His anguish following the incident is rooted in the irrepressible knowledge that, even when Polar seems most present and his connection to her seems most profound, she is absent, unreachable and artificial. As María Montoya states, "Cuando más cerca le parece estar de ella […] es en realidad cuando más alejado está" (757). The story highlights the link between the fragmented bodies that the cinematic close-up produces

and the sense that such bodies are uncannily devoid of subjectivity, a link that Ayala will reinforce implicitly in other stories.

The opening pages of the story emphasize the strong emotional pull that Polar's films exercise over the protagonist. His delusion that he has a personal relationship with the star is illustrated in the narrator's referring to the protagonist as "el amante" (288) and the days of Polar's film releases as "los días de cita" (287). For the protagonist, Polar's films are not mere reproductions being shown simultaneously to thousands of people, but instances of personal interaction with his lover. He feverishly anticipates her films by thinking that Polar "iba a aparecérsele de nuevo" (287): she will not simply appear but will appear *to* him, *for* him. The protagonist's fantasy of his intimacy with Polar exemplifies Richard Abel's description of the illusion of closeness and connection to stars that early cinema engendered for spectators. Summarizing the French early film critic Émile Vuillermoz, Abel notes that famous actors' "essence was delivered up to the spectator in a direct, intimate and profound encounter—'an absolute gift.' […] These stars became 'friends' to follow through different adventures. And the pleasure elicited by this new star/spectator bond was one of the chief reasons for the cinema's 'mysterious attraction'" ("*Photogénie*" 108). Like the spectator in Abel's description, the protagonist of "Polar, estrella" experiences each new film of the star as a "direct, intimate and profound encounter" with a woman he knows personally and deeply.

The protagonist's belief that he experiences personal communion with Polar when he watches her films corresponds to the intensity of his emotions before and during the screenings. We witness his frenzied anticipation of a new film of hers: "¡Qué emoción, los días en que iba a verla de nuevo! ¡Las tardes de estreno!" (288). When Polar's image appears onscreen, the protagonist's body registers his ecstasy in a powerful physical reaction—"El amante se sintió

conmovido por un cataclismo visceral: el diafragma le redujo el tórax" (288–289)—and the passage of the film reel through the projector is described as a pure succession of his emotions: "La cinta pasaba como pauta apretada de emociones, que su pulso iba llenando" (289). This heightened emotional response to the sumptuous, enlarged image of Garbo's face is not unique to the protagonist. Roland Barthes describes Garbo's visage in close-up as almost superhumanly powerful in its elicitation of lust from the spectator: "Garbo still belongs to that moment in cinema when capturing the human face still plunged audiences into the deepest ecstasy, when one literally lost oneself in a human image as one would in a philtre" ("The Face" 56). The power of Garbo's image resided not merely in the star's beauty and talent, but in the centrality of the close-up to her films: the spectator of a Garbo film was presented with a cornucopia of images of her face that were luxurious in their detail and in their apparent nearness to the spectator. Barthes's description of the ecstasy of Garbo's face and the protagonist's visceral reaction to Polar's image encapsulate the emotional force of the close-up in creating illusions of proximity to stardom for early moviegoers.

In Ayala's 1929 book of short essays about film, *Indagación del cinema,* he describes the obsessive devotion to stars that the cinema arouses in the public: "La multitud contempla al héroe. […] Observa sus movimientos y su actuación; sigue sus pasos, adicta, sean los que sean, con independencia de cualesquiera circunstancias episódicas" (53). This description echoes the director and film theorist Jean Epstein's comments on the cinema in 1921: "It becomes a certain need, like tobacco or coffee. I have my dose or I don't" ("Magnification" 240). What Ayala and Epstein identify as the addictive character of 1920s film stars is depicted in "Polar, estrella" through the protagonist's fanatical efforts to consume every available image of Polar. He supplements his viewings of her films with his collection of film stock of her close-ups and with

the many reproductions of her image that populate the city streets in the form of advertisements. He dislikes her film posters because the still, black-and-white images "le ofrecían, falsificados, los gestos de Polar" (*Narrativa completa* 288)—it is as though the obviously false version of Polar that appears on the posters mocks his attempts to commune with her. By contrast, the lit-up advertisements featuring Polar's image offer the protagonist the same illusion of intimate, personal connection that her films bestow upon him: "Los anuncios luminosos […] daban la sensación exacta de su movimiento, de su instantaneidad y de su alegría" (288).[30] When viewing Polar's films, the protagonist strains to receive her gaze at the most intense and direct angles: "Él se desvivía por forzar aun los más agudos ángulos de su gran mirada" (289). These constant efforts to increase his every contact with Polar—even seeking to intensify his connection with her during the close-ups in her films, the moments when she is ostensibly most present to him—illustrate his insatiable, anxiety-fueled desire to achieve true proximity to the star.

The protagonist's interaction with his collection of images of Polar's face in close-up is particularly indicative of his longing to overcome the ever-present distance between himself and the object of his desire. The description of his hand grasping a strip of film stock as he gazes at her miniscule images presents the action in unmistakably erotic terms: "Sus dedos […] se entregaron a la delicia táctil de un trozo de *film* cinematográfico —rizo suelto, curvado como una calcomanía— en cuyo borde acariciaron seco pespunte de telegrama" (288). His fingers surrender to the pleasure of caressing an object that is sensuously curved like the female form: as the protagonist touches the filmstrip, he seems to imagine himself stroking Polar's very body. He

[30] Ayala's avant-garde prose makes frequent reference to the apparent aliveness of light-up advertisements. "Cazador en el alba" describes the "inhumana especie recién salida de los huevos eléctricos que las grandes avenidas incuban" and states that "la convivencia con tan superbos personajes le ofreció [al protagonista] la ilusión de vivir entre las páginas de una Historia natural inventada" (*Narrativa completa* 312). In "Hora muerta" the light-up ads blink and pant (284), and the protagonist of "Medusa artificial" is accompanied on her evening walk home by "los anuncios luminosos que patinaban ya sobre los edificios" (298).

then holds the film stock up to the light to savor the sumptuous detail of her face in close-up: "Se acercó a la ventana para poner al trasluz —miniatura, germen— el rostro de Polar en gran plano, gustando matices insignificantes en la escala micrométrica de su sonrisa" (288). Immediately afterward, the protagonist takes his ticket to Polar's film out of his wallet and caresses it so that it quivers in his hand ("lo hizo temblar […] entre sus dedos" [288]). As with the filmstrip, the erotic description of the protagonist's interaction with the ticket illustrates his fantasy of being able to actually touch Polar's body. The ticket and the miniature image of Polar's face in close-up serve as substitutes for the star herself, and the protagonist clutches and fondles these objects as a means of replicating the physical contact with her that is denied to him.[31]

The protagonist's unfulfilled desire to be truly close to Polar causes even his moments of deepest pleasure to be contaminated by the sinister knowledge of her absence. On the day of her new film's release, when the omnipresence of Polar's image throughout the city should signify her availability and proximity to the protagonist, his elation is marred by his awareness of the posters' imperfect duplication of the star. The narrator's description of the protagonist straining to intensify his contact with Polar's gaze during her close-ups is followed by an expression of his anxiety when her image is extinguished at the end of a scene: "Cuando recibía el disparo

[31] The protagonist's use of the film image of Polar—and in particular, of images of her isolated body parts—as a substitute for the woman herself recalls the broad concept of fetishism: the fixation on the body part or item of clothing of an object of desire as a way of simulating a sexual possession that is impossible in reality. Though many iterations of the notion of fetishism throughout history are relevant to the role of the film image in Ayala's story, Sigmund Freud's brief 1927 essay "Fetishism" merits specific mention for its emphasis on the fetish's effect of simultaneously protecting against and realizing an intolerable truth. Freud's essay asserts that the fetish arises to shield the male subject from his knowledge of his mother's lack of a penis, which terrifies him because it suggests his own vulnerability to castration. The function of the fetish is to allow the subject to remain in a state of pre-knowledge of this fact—an underwear fetish, for example, centers on an object that conceals the mother's genitals—and thus it serves to protect him from being cognizant of something he wishes to forget. At the same time, his (unconscious) knowledge that the fetish provides a false illusion masking an incontrovertible reality means that the fetish is also a sinister symbol of the very fact it ostensibly refutes: "Both the disavowal and the affirmation of the castration have found their way into the construction of the fetish itself" (156). As we will see, "Polar, estrella" depicts the protagonist becoming increasingly aware, against his will, of the reality of the star's absence from him. The film image, while initially serving to disguise this unpleasant reality, eventually makes it manifest. Like Freud's fetishist, Ayala's protagonist grapples with intolerable knowledge that he wishes to repress, and the means by which he inhibits this knowledge is also the agent of its eventual confirmation.

ineludible, una corriente le anegaba de ausencia" (289). Polar's sudden disappearances throughout the course of a film are inescapable ("ineludible"), as is the protagonist's unwelcome knowledge of her absence. The description of Polar's image as it blooms onscreen emphasizes the star's exquisite beauty, but it also highlights her fundamental distance. As her image appears, the protagonist's mind is flooded with "la evidencia difícil de lo astral, de lo inasible. ¡Polar, estrella de cine! ¡Belleza imposible, lejana y múltiple!" (289). Polar resembles a literal star in her otherworldly perfection, but she is also star-like in that she is impossible to grasp: she is "inasible," "lejana."

When the projector glitch occurs, then, this bizarre and out-of-the-ordinary trauma is coexistent with the expected trauma of Polar's sudden disappearances at the end of each scene, which the protagonist must endure every time he watches one of her films. The description of the accident, which opens with the star's face fading from the screen, emphasizes that the incident constitutes a more intense version of the discomfort the protagonist experiences when Polar's image vanishes:

> Llegó sin falta el momento pálido de la persecución. El rostro de la estrella, asustada, naufragaba en el lienzo, o se perdía como una estampa entre las hojas de aquel rincón en que se cortaban dos planos (alas tiernas de blancura) a su espalda. Pero, apenas pasado el peligro anecdótico y previsto, surgió otro mayor. Este, fuera de programa: fraguado en la cabina. Una irregularidad de la máquina, o una perfidia del *cameraman*: —personaje mitológico—. (Al enamorado se le engarzaron los dos sobresaltos en una línea continua del temblor.) El accidente había quebrado el ritmo de la cinta y la cintura de la estrella. La mitad superior de su cuerpo, abajo. Los pies, en un segundo piso del *écran*. Era una terrible pesadilla su cuerpo disociado: su bella cabeza, sonriente y encendido, por los suelos.
> …Un salto de la máquina proyectora colocó el engranaje; reorganizó la escena. El encanto se hizo normal y minucioso. (289)

The projector malfunction consists of an image of Polar's whole body being split between the bottom half of one frame and the top half of the frame that follows, so that her lower body

appears above her upper body. The glitch effectively creates two close-up shots: one of her legs and feet, the other of her shoulders and head. The protagonist's horror at this image of anatomical fragmentation is well captured by the statement "Era una terrible pesadilla su cuerpo disociado." As the rhythm of the film reel's progress through the projector is broken ("quebrado"), so is Polar's body: she is split violently in half, transformed from a whole woman into a scattered collection of body parts. For the protagonist, the close-up carves up not just Polar's onscreen image but Polar herself. His beloved star now appears to him as an amalgamation of independent parts that may temporarily be arranged into the pleasing shape of a woman but may just as easily be rearranged into grotesque disarray at any moment. This new conception of Polar is indeed nightmarish in its apparent lack of humanness and animation.

The dual experience of the close-up—as both pleasurable vehicle of intimacy and disturbing agent of bodily segmentation—that is undergone by the protagonist of "Polar, estrella" encapsulates the contradictory nature of the close-up that several early film critics commented on. Epstein's account of the close-up's illusion of intimacy is particularly vivid:

> The close-up modifies the drama by the impact of proximity. Pain is within reach. If I stretch out my arm I touch you, and that is intimacy. I can count the eyelashes of this suffering. I would be able to taste the tears. Never before has a face turned to mine in that way. Ever closer it presses against me, and I follow it face to face. It's not even true that there is air between us; I consume it. It is in me like a sacrament. Maximum visual acuity. ("Magnification" 239)

Epstein's description is a relevant point of reference for Ayala's story because, like the protagonist, Epstein experiences the close-up as a means of direct, personal communion with the film star. The spectator of the close-up, Epstein writes, feels that he can "touch" the onscreen actor—not only physically, by reaching out his hand, but emotionally, by transcending the distance between his mind and hers. He feels the star's suffering; the internal landscape of her emotions is accessible to him. Just as the protagonist believes that Polar looks directly at him,

Epstein asserts that the face in close-up turns to him, and that this gaze is more intimate than any experienced in real life. There seems to be literally no distance between him and the star: he denies "that there is air between us." Mary Ann Doane similarly observes that the close-up "supports the cinema's aspiration to be the vehicle of presence" (93) and that early Hollywood films in particular employed "the close-up to suggest proximity, intimacy, knowledge of interiority" (107). Ayala concurs with Epstein and Doane by richly illustrating the power of the close-up to create an illusion of utter nearness to and communion with a beautiful star.

Yet even as it communicates intense intimacy, the close-up signals the absence and artificiality of the star by reducing him or her to an inhuman series of independent body parts. Doane also notes that "the most heavily used close-up, that of the face, fragments the body, decapitating it" (91). Indeed, some critics during the first decades of cinema were disturbed by the violence the close-up performs upon the human form. In 1912, the French film critic Yhcam[32] reacted to the predominance of close shots that cut the actor off at the knees by proclaiming, "Now we have reached what could be called *the age of the legless cripple*," and asserting that this effect was "highly disagreeable and shocking" (72). When the camera framed a man's body and excluded his head, Yhcam described the actor as having "found himself suddenly decapitated" (72).[33] Similarly, in 1917 the novelist and critic Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette described Abel Gance's film *Mater Dolorosa* by recalling "certain close ups in which the speaking, suppliant head of Emmy Lynn floats like a decapitated flower" (136). Yhcam's and Colette's reactions to the close-up resemble that of the protagonist of "Polar, estrella" because they do not experience the truncation of an actor's body onscreen as the modification of a mere

[32] "Yhcam" was a pseudonym; the true identity of this critic remains unknown.
[33] Yhcam found the effect of close-up so unsettling that he called for directors to warn audiences before a close-up occurred: "The director should always begin by projecting the subject with a clear reference point, for example, a dog with a man. If, later, he wants to increase the size of one or the other, in order to better capture details, he should announce to the audience that the subject is being projected in an enlargement of two, three, or four times" (73).

image. These critics describe the actors who are shown in close-up as "legless" and "decapitated": their actual bodies seem to have been grotesquely amputated by the camera's framing. Likewise, the horror of Ayala's protagonist following the projector glitch derives from his sense that Polar herself has been segmented and dispersed. The anatomical fragmentation that results from close-up is depicted in Ayala's story as a form of violence whose effect on the spectator is traumatic.

The rest of "Polar, estrella," following the projector's malfunction, centers on the protagonist's increasing inability to experience the illusion of Polar's presence. When the film resumes after the incident, Polar is shown in her boudoir about to undress, and the protagonist soothes himself with the knowledge that the star's availability will soon be restored through the image of her intact, naked body: "El amante, turbado, se dispuso a verla desnudarse, soñando con el cumplimiento de la más estimada promesa" (289). Polar's body is described part-by-part, suggesting a series of close-ups: "Clareó la aurora de su espalda con meandros voltaicos, y sus brazos se levantaron —sirena en la orilla del espejo—, brazos helados, de naufragio. Sus piernas, serpientes lívidas, estaban surcadas, como el mapa, de venillas azules" (289). Yet this preamble is followed not by the nude image of Polar that the protagonist yearns for but by her sudden disappearance, as the scene ends. Although he is accustomed to these disappearances—the "peligro anecdótico y previsto" (289)—and is normally able to tolerate them, he now finds her vanishing unbearable. He leaves the theater unsettled ("Él quedó resentido y nervioso" [289]) and returns the following day to see the film again, expecting Polar's disappearance to be less upsetting the second time around. Yet his distress is equal to or greater than that of the previous day: "No obstante, al llegar la escena íntima del tocador, se le reprodujo la emoción con igual intensidad. (Matizada de ira.)" (290). He abruptly flees the theater and returns to his home,

where, in a fit of rage, he burns his collection of Polar's filmstrips. The description of the film stock emphasizes that the collection normally serves as a comforting reminder of Polar's presence—it exists "en manojo abundante" and it trembles at his touch as if alive (291)—but Polar's face in close-up, like her image on the film posters, now seems to mock the protagonist's desperate desire to experience intimacy with her.

What can account for the difference between the protagonist's reaction to Polar's quotidian disappearances at the beginning of the story, when he finds these vanishings unsettling but tolerable, and at the end of the story, when her disappearance enrages and torments him? Her sudden absence from the screen at the end of the boudoir scene occurs after the protagonist has witnessed her body divided into its constituent parts. Although the projector glitch does not repeat itself during his second viewing of the film, his mind is invaded by the memory of Polar's fractured body—"No conseguía lavarse la memoria: su recuerdo estaba adherido" (291)—and this knowledge colors his experience of her disappearance. It is as though the nightmarish image of her "cuerpo disociado" has made his knowledge of her absence total and all-consuming. Prior to the projector glitch, the symbols of Polar's absence—her disappearances at the end of a scene and the uncanny falseness of her movie posters—were unpleasant for the protagonist but were not powerful enough to negate the illusion of her presence. By contrast, the vision of her fragmented body fully confirms her absence and artificiality: after the glitch, the protagonist experiences her disappearances as wrenchingly explicit proof of the fact that intimacy with Polar has always been and will always be denied to him. This story posits a connection between the dispersal of Polar's body and her lack of real presence. After viewing her malfunctioning film, the protagonist is struck by the contrast between "las muchachas con cuya presencia cruzaba" and "el recuerdo de su Polar, alta, celeste y quebradiza como un ángel" (292). This description

highlights again Polar's star-like nature, her divine unreachability. In contrast to the solid presence of the girls he passes on the street, Polar is "quebradiza": liable to fragment into pieces at any moment.

At the end of the story, as the protagonist's agony at Polar's absence drives him to suicide, the fragmentary nature of her body seems to contaminate him. His hands "se le perdían, autónomas" (292), recalling the star's eerily independent legs and head during the projector glitch. As he dives into the river to drown himself, his body splits at the midsection—"se dobló por la cintura" (292)—like Polar's body being sliced at the waist into two separate images. His body disperses, dividing into its constituent parts: he is "desencuadernado," "desenlazándose"; his feet are "divergentes" (292). As he hits the river floor, "se quebró como si hubiera sido de porcelana" (292): the protagonist is now, like Polar, "quebradizo." In his final moments, he thinks of his beloved, and the description encapsulates the dual character of Polar as both sumptuously proximate and uncannily artificial. The protagonist vividly experiences her presence: "la sentía presente, ángel ¡por fin! apiadado." Yet in the next sentence, she is described as a "maniquí de cera" (292): a simulacrum of a woman that is devoid of subjectivity. The revelation of Polar as a collection of autonomous body parts that may be scattered into disarray without warning forces the protagonist to see her as artificial and absent rather than as a human being with whom he experiences intimacy and communion.

The fragmentation of Polar's body bears a resemblance to the way Siegfried Kracauer describes the segmented, abstracted bodies of modern performers in his 1927 essay "The Mass Ornament." Kracauer believed that mass spectacle in the era of industrial capitalism was characterized by its utilization of performers not as human beings but as object-like components of an aesthetic display. The quintessential example of the mass ornament, he asserted, was the

Tiller Girls, the dance troupes that presented vast quantities of seemingly identical young women kicking their legs in sync. According to Kracauer, the mass ornament required that its members exist onstage as nothing more than a collection of geometrically precise limbs. The individuality and subjectivity of the performers were excluded from the spectacle, as each dancer was "reduced to a pure assemblage of lines" (76):

> The ornament, detached from its bearers, […] consists of lines and circles like those found in textbooks on Euclidean geometry. […] Both the proliferations of organic life and the emanations of spiritual life remain excluded. The Tiller Girls can no longer be reassembled into human beings after the fact. Their mass gymnastics are never performed by the fully preserved bodies. […] Arms, thighs, and other segments are the smallest component parts of the composition. (77–78)

Kracauer emphasizes both the apparent autonomy of the Tiller Girls' limbs—the agents of the kicking legs are not the girls but the legs themselves moving of their own volition—and the abstract, geometric nature of their bodies: each body part appears as smooth and standardized as a commodity produced in a factory. Both of these elements contribute to the dehumanization of the performers. The member of the mass ornament appears devoid of subjectivity, individual characteristics and interiority —Kracauer writes that he or she "does not appear as a total personality" (83)—because the performer is reduced to a mere image, which can be dissected into its component parts and rearranged as easily as one might cut up a picture torn from a magazine.

Susan Buck-Morss's description of the early Hollywood film star similarly conveys the nature of the modern performer as an abstract assemblage of lines. The film star "was an awesome aesthetic spectacle" who "fulfilled her/his mass function by obliterating the idiosyncratic irregularities of the natural body" ("The Cinema Screen" 53). The star's facial features existed as "surface, ornamental lines—contours on the screen" (53). Kracauer does not address the cinema in his essay, but Buck-Morss's comments demonstrate the applicability of the

concept of the mass ornament to the Hollywood star. "Polar, estrella" provides an example of the mass-ornament-like character of the film actor in that Polar, like Kracauer's depiction of the Tiller Girls, does not exist onscreen as a whole person endowed with subjectivity. Just as the chorus girls are transformed from individual human beings into conglomerations of autonomous limbs, the projector glitch causes Polar to fragment into a series of body parts that appear to act independently: her decapitated head that rests in the bottom half of the screen continues to smile at the protagonist.

Luis Buñuel's 1927 essay "Del plano fotogénico" further illustrates the points of connection between "The Mass Ornament" and Ayala's story by presenting the cinematic close-up in terms that echo Kracauer's text. Like Kracauer's description of the chorus girls, Buñuel argues that the close-up counters the total view of a person, in which the continuity of the whole body is preserved, with a fragmented view in which the person is broken down into many separate parts. He contrasts a shot of a man running in which the man's entire body is shown in full with the same scene presented through a series of close-ups: rather than viewing the man, we see a pair of rapidly moving feet, then a face straining with effort, then other parts of his body in isolation.[34] Similarly, he describes a scene of a woman dancing in which close-up is employed in order to depict the woman as an assemblage of separate body parts: "se nos da descompuesta en tres planos: pies, vientre, ojos" (6). Buñuel writes that in these examples, the important elements of the scene are shown "abstraídos" from their context and that the camera eliminates "lo contingente y accesorio" in order to present "aislado, intacto, lo necesario, lo esencial" (6). The similarities between this description of the close-up and Kracauer's formulation of the mass ornament are significant. The kicking legs of the Tiller Girls, which Kracauer argues are made

[34] Buñuel compares a shot of "un hombre que corre" to one in which "desaparece todo y vemos unos veloces pies, luego el desfile vertiginoso del paisaje, la cara angustiada del corredor. […] En sucesivos planos el objetivo presenta abstraídos los elementos esenciales de esa carrera" (6).

autonomous from the dancers' bodies, correspond to the body parts that a close-up shows in isolation ("lo necesario, lo esencial"). The rest of the filmed person's body, as well as his or her personality, is considered "lo contingente y accesorio" and discarded, just as the elements of the dancers that do not contribute to the aesthetic display of the mass ornament are eliminated from the spectacle.

Buñuel states that the type of cinematic framing he has described with his examples of the running man and the dancing woman results in "cine-puro," in which "sólo luces y sombras de variable intensidad, interposiciones y yuxtaposiciones de volúmenes, geometrias móviles, son objeto para el artista. Allí todo queda deshumanizado" (6).[35] In other words, the use of close-up to present body parts in isolation is a means of transforming the filmed person into an abstract collection of lines, shadows and shapes. Buñuel aptly identifies this technique as dehumanization: the actor's body functions as an object rather than as an extension of his or her subjectivity. Kracauer makes the same argument with the Tiller Girls by showing that the dancers are "reduced to a pure assemblage of lines" and any expression of their individuality and inner lives is excluded. Although Kracauer mourns this transformation of the human into an object and Buñuel celebrates it, both men identify the role that anatomical fragmentation plays in dehumanizing the performer.

In "Polar, estrella," this connection between close-up and dehumanization is illustrated through the protagonist's alienation from Polar following the projector glitch. Prior to the accident, the illusion of his intimacy with the star is sustained through the belief that the woman

[35] Buñuel's use of "deshumanizado" here is likely a reference to José Ortega y Gasset's 1924 essay "La deshumanización del arte," which defines modern art by its penchant for stylizing and abstracting the human form to the point that the distinction between the human and the non-human becomes negligible. Buñuel's description of "cine-puro" echoes Ortega's assertion that the modern artist who depicts a human being ignores the person's inner world of thoughts and emotions and "sólo atiende a lo exterior, a las luces y sombras, a los valores cromáticos" (362). See the fifth chapter of this dissertation for an extensive discussion of the relevance of Orteguian *deshumanización* to conceptions of the cinema in the Spanish avant-garde.

he sees onscreen is a subject with an inner world to which he has access, a woman who gazes at him lovingly and receives his enraptured gazes in return. (We can recall Epstein's description of intimacy with the film star as being based in the sensation of having emotional communion with the star.) After he witnesses her body dissected into separate parts, her presence onscreen is reduced to what Buñuel describes as "sólo luces y sombras de variable intensidad, interposiciones y yuxtaposiciones de volúmenes, geometrias móviles": he can no longer maintain the fantasy that her image onscreen corresponds to the presence of a real woman before him. As Miguel Nieto Nuño observes, Polar after the projector glitch is "esa mujer posible que la sintaxis de planos neiga" (53). Like the running man or the dancing woman in Buñuel's essay, the use of close-up negates the continuity of Polar's body, and with it, her presence as a whole person before the spectator. Thus, even when she appears to be close to the protagonist, he is unable to overcome the conviction that she is irremediably absent and unreachable, and that her apparent presence before him is but a mirage. As I will argue in the sections to follow, Ayala employs literary close-up in other stories in order to convey the sense that the person described in this manner is not a subject with whom one can experience intimacy and communion. The women of Ayala's stories who are presented through close-up share Polar's qualities of being "inasible," "lejana" and "quebradiza."

II. "Cazador en el alba"

The literary version of close-up, in which characters are described through a sequence of "shots" that isolate individual body parts, is a frequent presence in Ayala's avant-garde prose. In "El boxeador y un ángel," the climactic boxing match scene is illustrated through a series of close-ups on body parts: the protagonist's knee on the ground, his bowed head, the smile of his

opponent, the referee's finger in the air, a trickle of blood snaking down the protagonist's face.[36] Similarly, "Hora muerta" presents an index of the typical characters of the city by zooming in on one or two body parts of each character: the "frente alta" of the captain, the "dientes blancos" of the boxer, the "sonrisas inexpresivas" of the spectators, the "sonrisas grandotas" of black men, the "ojos dilatados en gafas de velocidad" of the motorcyclist (278).[37] A passage at the beginning of "Medusa artificial" that describes the main character's action by focusing on her various body parts in succession—"Tere alzó la cabeza y dejó caer los brazos. Sus piernas se extendieron […] bajo el puente de la mesita, y sus ojos descendieron a la máquina" (297)—also constitutes a typical example of Ayala's use of literary close-up. In this story, Juli Highfill notes that Ayala includes an "enlarged, close-up image of [Tere's] face" (*Modernism* 70), and Carolyn Richmond observes that "un primerísimo plano del ojo de la muchacha" is employed (21). Montoya notes that close-up is a predominant technique of Ayala's avant-garde prose as a whole: "De las diversas técnicas cinematográficas que emula la pluma ayaliana es la imagen en primer plano la que despunta con mayor fuerza en las narraciones de *Cazador en el alba* y, sobre todo, en las que integran *El boxeador y un ángel*" (752). Indeed, the reader of these collections will observe that Ayala often eschews presenting characters' bodies as whole entities in favor of descriptions that mimic the cinematic close-up by focusing separately on various body parts.

Literary close-up occupies an especially prominent role in "Cazador en el alba" (1929), Ayala's novella about a young soldier from the countryside whose stay in a Madrid hospital precipitates his introduction to the wonders of the modern metropolis. Rosa Navarro Durán notes

[36] "Cayó con una rodilla en la tierra. La cabeza inclinada. […] Obstinado el negro en su risa sinvergüenza, de biseles blancos. […] El dedo conminatorio del árbitro descendía respiraciones expectantes. […] Y un hilo de sangre por su cara" (276).

[37] In "Hora muerta," literary close-up coexists with cinematic close-up. A character at the movies is entranced by the illusion that the film star looks directly at him (like the protagonist of "Polar, estrella"), and the description of her image onscreen suggests that a close-up of the star's face is followed by a close-up of her hand beckoning to him: "Sonrisa triste, estereotipada. Palidez y abanico. Y una mano" (280).

that the narrator's gaze in this story "es a veces cámara de cine" (31): as Ayala details the protagonist's astonished witnessing of 1920s modernity, the reader has the sense that the images and events described are presented within the frame of a cinema screen. The cinematic experience of the story is due above all to Ayala's use of literary close-up to describe the female characters, which occurs with noteworthy frequency. Nearly every one of the women encountered by the protagonist, Antonio Arenas—whether random women he passes on the street, prostitutes he chooses among at a brothel or the individual woman with whom he has a relationship—is described as a series of disconnected, seemingly autonomous body parts. These women resemble Polar both in the fragmentary nature of their bodies and in Antonio's sense of distance from them. The central theme of this story, the rural person's experience of alienation in the modern city, is communicated most strongly through the scenes in which literary close-up is conspicuously employed. The connection between the technique of close-up and the protagonist's sensation of alienation from the women described in this manner suggests that "Cazador en el alba" reiterates the idea of the close-up as an instrument of dehumanization. Just as the close-up causes the protagonist of "Polar, estrella" to sense the fundamental absence of his beloved even when she seems abundantly present, the fragmented women of "Cazador en el alba" are depicted as irremediably unreachable even when they are close enough for Antonio to reach out and touch them.

Antonio's first experience of urban women centers on his impression that they are composed of many separate, geometrically precise parts. The women he glimpses on the street seem to be collages of the advertisements for nylons and gloves that cover the city:

> Para un soldado (si procede del campo), las mujeres de la ciudad son un producto industrial, tan perfecto, tan admirable como la máquina de escribir del capitán o la calculadora del comisario. Una maravilla de la técnica moderna: exactas, articuladas.

> Este soldado —campesino de origen— ha contemplado en cualquier escaparate un par de piernas arquetipo, en otro, una pequeña mano enguantada; en otro, una cabeza, un busto… Al mismo tiempo ha visto por la calle todas estas piezas, organizadas, en marcha. Puras formas de mujer, esquemas de mujer. […]
> Para él las mujeres son tan inaccesibles como las propias deidades del Olimpo. Próximas, al alcance de la mano, pero inaccesibles. (312–313)

This passage echoes Kracauer's description of the mass ornament and Buñuel's formulation of the film star in close-up in that it emphasizes both the apparent autonomy of the women's body parts and the reduction of their bodies to simple geometric shapes. The smooth, standardized limbs and heads of these women recall industrially produced commodities such as typewriters or adding machines, and the arrangement of these parts into the shape of human beings results in "puras formas de mujer, esquemas de mujer" (6): abstract approximations of women in the manner of a Cubist portrait.[38] What is perhaps more jarring for Antonio is that the women's existence as isolated parts is prior to their status as fully formed human beings. The women who stride past him on the street appear to be combinations of advertisements that present body parts in isolation: a slender pair of legs that ends at the hips, a feminine hand unconnected to any arm, a decapitated head adorned with makeup that smiles seductively at passersby. Antonio sees not women walking past him but "todas estas piezas, organizadas, en marcha": it is the body parts themselves, not the human beings to whom they pertain, that are the subject of the action. These urban women are inherently fragmentary, liable to disperse into pieces at any moment, because their natural state is that of many separate, autonomous parts. Their existence as whole women, Antonio senses, is illusory and temporary.

[38] Rafael de Cózar observes the resemblance of these supernaturally perfect women to the early film star: "La técnica moderna viene posibilitando la perfección física de la mujer, que puede encarnar la estrella de cine" (42). Indeed, the lack of individual characteristics and organic imperfections in the urban women recalls Buck-Morss's assertion that the film star obliterates "the idiosyncratic irregularities of the natural body" in order to become "surface, ornamental lines—contours on the screen" (53).

The similarities between the urban women described in this passage and Polar are striking. Like Polar, these women are "quebradizas": their appearance as intact human figures is fragile, as each seems to exist more as a loosely bound collection of independent parts than as a solid, indivisible entity. Additionally, both Polar and the modern women of Madrid are described as eerily distant even when they appear to be tantalizingly close. The urban women are "tan inaccesibles como las propias deidades del Olimpo," that is, goddess-like both in their perfection and their untouchability. We can compare this statement with the description of Polar as "lo astral, […] lo inasible" (289), "belleza imposible, lejana" (289) and "alta, celeste y quebradiza como un ángel" (292). The women Antonio glimpses share with Polar the qualities of otherworldly beauty and insurmountable distance—hence the use of celestial descriptors for the film star as well as the urban women. Like a star in the sky, both Polar and the women on the street may be looked at but not touched; no matter how close one appears to be, reaching out and grasping them remains impossible.

When Antonio visits a brothel shortly after arriving in the city, the prostitutes share the fragmentary nature of the women he passes on the streets. The prostitutes are described in the same terms as the urban women: they are "una maravilla de la técnica moderna," and their body parts are "exactas, articuladas" (313). They are repeatedly referred to as "mujeres artificiales" (313), echoing the description of the women who seem to be amalgamations of advertisements rather than living, breathing subjects with inner worlds. When Antonio is asked to choose among three women, the narration depicts the prostitutes' feet in isolation: "Su mirada rodó por los suelos; encontró, alineados, tres pares de zapatos: charol, blancos y rojos" (313). Montoya observes that Antonio's gaze in this scene resembles that of "el ojo cinematográfico" (753). Indeed, this image employs literary close-up by presenting the prostitutes' feet as entities

separate from the rest of their bodies, mimicking the close-up's isolation of a single body part.[39] It is important to note the correlation in this scene between literary close-up, which produces images of anatomical fragmentation, and the protagonist's unsettling sensation that he is interacting with artificial women.

Elena Barroso Villar notes of Antonio's girlfriend, Aurora, that although the individual woman with whom the protagonist falls in love might be expected to contrast with the artificial women he has previously encountered, Aurora in fact serves as another example of "[la] mujer indiferenciada […] sin marcas personales distintivas" (109). It is true that Antonio's relationship with Aurora is marked by same alienation he experiences in his brief interactions with unknown women, which echoes the frustration felt by the protagonist of "Polar, estrella" following the projector glitch. Like Polar, the prostitutes and the anonymous women of Madrid, Aurora often seems inexplicably unreachable and absent; Antonio struggles to believe the evidence of her presence before him. Aurora also resembles the previously mentioned women in the fragmentary manner in which she is described. Ayala repeatedly makes use of literary close-up when depicting Aurora's body, and the technique is accompanied by descriptions that suggest she is devoid of subjectivity.

[39] The image of the prostitutes' isolated feet constitutes a literary version of a popular cinematic trope in the 1920s: camera framing that seductively showcased women's bare legs and feet in high heels. The Garbo film *The Temptress* (1926) contains a memorable, extensive shot of the view from under the table of a high-class party: the camera travels backward to show dozens of female legs dancing along to the music, slipping in and out of their heels and playing footsie with adjacent male legs. In the Spanish content, examples can be found in *Rosa de Madrid* (1927) and *Esencia de verbena* (1930), both of which depict the frenzied pleasure-fests of the *verbenas* (popular street fairs). In *Rosa de Madrid*, a trio of male students fight for a turn at a telescope trained on a carousel full of young women, and the camera's view is that of the telescope focused on a fishnet-clad leg and high heel-shod foot slung over the body of a carousel horse. In *Esencia de verbena*, a woman shown only from the waist down slowly hoists her stockings up her thigh, and this erotic image is interspersed with a collage-like assemblage of disembodied, ogling male eyes. The isolated focus on legs and feet that the cinema made possible through the technique of the close-up provided a means of exhibiting onscreen the recent phenomenon of short hemlines and high heels, and of adapting the voyeuristic pleasure of the 1920s urban dweller—who was treated daily to the spectacle of exposed female leg—to the movie theater.

When Antonio first encounters Aurora, at a dance hall, she is presented to the reader in a part-by-part description that focuses separately on each of her body parts. Ayala shows us her dainty feet, then her hand on Antonio's shoulder, then her leg sheathed in white silk, then her undulating waist, then her small, snail-like ear tucked beneath her hair: the resemblance of the description to a sequence of cinematic close-ups is unmistakable.[40] Shortly afterward, Antonio and Aurora sit together to take a break from dancing, and she is described as a conglomeration of autonomous body parts:

> Abandonó su cabeza, tesoro marino, en el hombro del cazador. Había perdido la cabeza, y su cuerpo, no vigilado, a la deriva, reclamaba todas las inquietudes. […] Cuando Aurora perdía la cabeza, cuando a Aurora se le vaciaba de expresión la cabeza, los mandos de su persona se reunían en otra cualquier parte de su cuerpo —en una mano, en un pie impaciente—, y entonces, si se quería dialogar con ella, acéfala, era preciso entrar en relación con el órgano habilitado, cuya fuerza expresiva nadie sospecharía. (316)

This passage depicts Aurora's individual body parts as endowed with subjectivity: the capacity to listen and express herself ("los mandos de su persona") lies not with Aurora herself but with her hand or her foot. Concurrent with this attribution of subjectivity to body parts is the impression that Aurora is inanimate, as her face is uncannily devoid of expression and her "decapitated" head rests on Antonio's shoulder like a discarded object. Her body is adrift ("a la deriva"): no longer united together as a single entity, her body parts float aimlessly apart from one another. Although the tone of this passage is playful, its content is sinister in its similarity to more anxiety-inducing moments in Ayala's avant-garde prose: Aurora resembles Polar splitting into her constituent parts, or the bodies of the urban women being re-dispersed into the advertisements from which they were assembled.

[40] "Sus pies eran pequeños y superfluos remates. […] Puso la mano en el hombre de Antonio, y adelantó la pierna, redonda en blanca seda. Su cintura era ingrave, cambiante, reiterada marea. Bajo la rubia balumba de su pelo asomaba, tierna, una caracola de verdad —de carne, de nácar— y un aro de oro, temblando" (315).

In subsequent passages, Aurora's body parts continue to be described as autonomous and endowed with their own subjectivity. When Antonio goes to her house to pick her up before a date, her head seen through the window recalls early film critics' descriptions of a face in close-up as a decapitated head that eerily continues to move: "Dentro del marco de la ventana se veía su cabeza, planeta fiel alrededor de la bombilla. Su cabeza sonámbula; cérea, hueca y bella cabeza parlante que Antonio, parado en la calle, contemplaba con arrobo rústico-místico" (320). Aurora's head is "framed" in the window as if within the borders of a film camera or movie screen. Just as the cinematic close-up often engenders the sense that the depicted body part acts of its own accord, Aurora's head is a "cabeza parlante," suggesting that it continues to speak even after having been severed from her body. (Antonio's reaction to this quotidian image with "arrobo rústico-místico" deepens the impression that Aurora's head acts with miraculous autonomy.) The apparent independence of Aurora's head also generates the sense that her head is inhuman and object-like: it is "hollow" and "made of wax," an entity more similar to a factory-made commodity than a body part.[41] Immediately following this scene, Aurora "abandons" her hand on Antonio's arm: "Había abandonado la mano sobre el brazo de su novio, como se abandona un guante sobre una balaustrada" (320). This description reiterates the presentation of Aurora's body parts as detachable, no more intrinsically attached to her person than a pair of gloves. Indeed, the comparison of her hand to an item of clothing reinforces the figuration of her body parts as object-like.

Antonio's profound feeling of alienation from Aurora is communicated in the scene in which the couple makes love for the first time; the contrast between the actual closeness of Aurora and her seeming unreachability is highlighted by the intimacy of the setting. As Antonio

[41] The description of Aurora's decapitated head in close-up as "cérea" recalls the description of Polar as a "maniquí de cera" (292) as the protagonist falls to the bottom of the river at the end of the story.

gazes down at her naked body in the bed, he feels as though he were looking at her from a great distance:

> Desde la alta perspectiva de los dioses y los aviadores, el mar no es, como desde la playa, una masa amorfa y caótica. Está lleno de triángulos, de planos, de líneas, de interferencias, de reiteraciones, de pliegues que se doblan y desdoblan como limpias sábanas de agua.
> Entre las sábanas de su cama, Aurora parecía una deidad marina. Su cabeza, desmelenada de rubias algas, reposaba sobre la almohada de sus brazos paralelos. El alba dual de su pecho se cubría de espumas de encaje. Todo su cuerpo —presencia de una fuga— se evadía. […]
> Las piernas, bajo la ropa. La rizada concha del sexo, replegado el vértice entre las ingles…
> Era una divinidad. Pero como divinidad, inaccesible, inabordable, y siempre en cierto grado de ausencia.
> Antonio, mudo y vertical, la contemplaba desde la orilla.
> —¿Qué piensas, Antonio?
> —Pienso… […]
> No la reconocía. Era otra. O, al menos, ¡qué otra era! Su expresión genuina se había disipado de la cara, y vagaba por todo su cuerpo, como un ave fatigada que no encuentra dónde posarse: a veces, insinuada en una rodilla; a veces, temblando en un pecho.
> —Antonio, ¿en qué piensas? (322–323)

This scene is highly relevant to my analysis of the relationship between anatomical fragmentation and alienation in Ayala's work for several reasons. First, the description of Aurora constitutes a paradigmatic example of Ayala's technique of literary close-up. Her body is described through a series of images that present her body parts in isolation: her head resting on her arms, her chest, her legs, her groin. As in previous descriptions of women, Ayala emphasizes the geometric precision of her body parts: her arms are "parallel," her breasts are two identical suns, her vagina resembles a seashell in its spiral form. He also repeats the depiction of Aurora as devoid of subjectivity, as her expression—the representative of her emotions and thoughts—once again "wanders" and takes up residence in various body parts. Like Polar after the projector glitch, Aurora appears not as a whole person with an inner world but as a disjointed collection of parts that resemble objects. The abstraction with which Ayala describes her body recalls

Kracauer's statement that the performer in the mass ornament "consists of lines and circles like those found in textbooks on Euclidean geometry" (77) or Buñuel's assertion that the close-up reduces human beings to "sólo luces y sombras de variable intensidad" (6).

Antonio experiences alienation from Aurora through the sensation that he is looking at her from a great distance. He contrasts the feeling of intimacy with someone, which he compares to experiencing the sea from within as a "chaotic and amorphous mass," with the immense distance he feels when he looks at Aurora: she is like the ocean reduced to a series of neat triangles and precise lines, as it appears when seen from an airplane. This description again echoes Kracauer, who asserts that the mass ornament "resembles *aerial photographs* of landscapes and cities" (77). The participant in the mass ornament, like the film star in close-up, is stripped of the organic irregularity of the human body in order to exist as a collection of geometrically exact shapes; this abstraction of the body is concurrent with the sense that the person is being viewed from a great distance. The passage repeatedly underscores Antonio's sense that Aurora is so far away as to be beyond his reach: she is "inaccesible, inabordable y siempre en cierto grado de ausencia"; her body "se evadía." The description of Aurora as a "deidad" and "divinidad" also serves to illustrate her fundamental distance: we can recall the description of urban women as "tan inaccesibles como las propias deidades del Olimpo" (313) and that of Polar as "un ángel" (292) whose divinity is synonymous with her inaccessibility. As Aurora is reduced to a mere image, beautiful but untouchable, Antonio is able to interact with her only by "contemplating" her ("la contemplaba desde la orilla"). They are unable to experience the sharing of inner worlds that is the foundation of intimacy: Antonio struggles to respond to Aurora's repeated "¿Qué piensas?".

As Antonio views Aurora's body through the lens of close-up, she becomes unrecognizable to him: "No la reconocía. Era otra." This statement succinctly articulates the effect of the early cinema style known as *photogénie*, which was popular with directors such as Epstein and Buñuel. *Photogénie* aimed to film a familiar subject in such as a way that it became unrecognizable. As Abel puts it, "The effect of *photogénie* was singular: to make us *see ordinary things* as they had never been seen before. […] *Photogénie* defamiliarized the familiar" (110). Buñuel's essay "Del plano fotogénico" provides an illustration of *photogénie* through his example of the running man. While the traditional "cinematographic" way of filming the man would be to present his figure in full, segmenting his body into a series of close-ups achieves "el objeto de la fotogenia" (6). In Buñuel's example, the familiar images of the man's face and feet are, through the close-up, isolated from their context and made into abstract, foreign objects. His essay celebrating *photogénie* centers on the close-up because "lo medular y substancial a la fotogenia es […] el gran plano" (6). Epstein concurs, asserting that "the close-up […] is the maximum expression" of *photogénie* ("Magnification" 236). Indeed, the close-up was a favored technique of directors who wished to make filmed actors unrecognizable as human beings. Abel notes that the goal of *photogénie* was to counter "the classical aesthetic of coherence and unity in an artistic work […] by privileging the play of discontinuity at all levels of the text" (111). As we have seen, the close-up satisfies this objective of disrupting the continuity of the human body and transforming a single, coherent entity into an amalgamation of separate parts with no relation to one another. As Epstein declares, "The close-up transfigures man" ("The Senses" 243).

Epstein's essay "Magnification" (1921) opens with an extended description of a face in close-up that illustrates the link between close-up and *photogénie*'s intention of defamiliarizing the familiar:

> I will never find the way to say how much I love American close-ups. Point blank. A head suddenly appears on screen and drama, now face to face, seems to address me personally and swells with an extraordinary intensity. […] Muscular preambles ripple beneath the skin. Shadows shift, tremble, hesitate. Something is being decided. A breeze of emotion underlines the mouth with clouds. The orography of the face vacillates. Seismic shocks begin. Capillary wrinkles try to split the fault. A wave carries them away. Crescendo. A muscle bridles. The lip is laced with tics like a theater curtain. Everything is movement, imbalance, crisis. Crack. The mouth gives way, like a ripe fruit splitting open. As if slit by a scalpel, a keyboard-like smile cuts laterally into the corner of the lips. (235–236)

Doane observes that Epstein's description "transforms the face, usually reserved as the very locus of subjectivity, into a series of harsh and alien objects (a geographical site, a wave, a theater curtain, a piece of fruit, a keyboard)" (90). Indeed, Epstein identifies the potential of the close-up to isolate an extremely quotidian image—a smiling face—from its context of the human body so that it appears to be a strange object that the viewer is encountering for the first time. Doane's comment echoes the Hungarian film critic Béla Balázs, who wrote in 1948 that the defamiliarizing force of the close-up has the power to strip the human face of its subjectivity: "This most subjective and individual of human manifestations is rendered objective in the close-up" (*Theory of the Film* 60). For perhaps the same reason, Barthes refers to Garbo's face in close-up as "an admirable face-object" (56). And as we have seen, in the sex scene of "Cazador en el alba," Ayala demonstrates the close-up's capacity to make familiar subjects unrecognizable: depicted through literary close-up, Aurora is "otra." Similar to Epstein's comparison of the face in close-up to a series of objects, Aurora's body is described in inhuman terms: her hair is seaweed, her chest a sunrise, her genitals a seashell.[42]

[42] The reader will note that Ayala employs natural, primal descriptors—elements of the sea and the cosmos—as the means by which Aurora's body is made to seem inhuman. This echoes her initial presentation in the story: when Antonio sees her for the first time on the dance floor, she is described as "la mujer ibérica (y bastante romana), barroca, *vegetal*, rizada y curva" (315, emphasis mine). Ayala's conspicuous use of natural terms in connection with the dehumanization of the female character seems to playfully reference the age-old association of women with the material, organic world (and consequently their exclusion from the incorporeal world of thought and intellect). This ancient mode of dehumanization exists in a somewhat humorous juxtaposition with the highly modern form of objectification generated by the cinematic close-up.

Another way in which the close-up achieves the dehumanizing goals of *photogénie* is by endowing individual body parts with subjectivity, which contributes to making the body's owner appear inert and inanimate. Epstein observes "the almost godlike importance assumed in close-ups by parts of the human body" ("On certain characteristics" 316) and asserts that "an eye isolated by an iris" is elevated to the status of a character in a drama and made to seem alive (317). He describes a magazine contest in which readers were challenged to recognize famous actors by photos that had been cropped to show only their eyes. He characterizes the contest as "a curious unconscious attempt to get spectators into the habit of seeking and recognizing the distinctive personality of the eye segment" (317): the extreme close-up that isolates a pair of eyes confers subjectivity onto the eyes themselves. The impression that a body part in close-up has its own personality and acts with its own agency is a product of close-up's isolation of the part from the rest of the body so that it appears to be an independent being. Doane contends that the close-up "is always, at some level, an autonomous entity" (90); it is "freighted with an inherent separability or isolation, a 'for-itself' that inevitably escapes, to some degree, the tactics of continuity editing that strive to make it 'whole' again" (91). In other words, the close-up of a body part grants that part fetishistic independence, so that the whole actor continues to appear as a conglomeration of separate parts even after the close-up has ended. This aspect of the close-up is heavily emphasized in "Cazador en el alba." Aurora's body parts are repeatedly depicted as independent entities that are subjects in their own right: this is especially apparent in the dance floor scene, in which Antonio must speak to her hand or foot rather than to her. In the sex scene, when Aurora's expression once again disappears from her face and takes up residence in various body parts, her object-like character—along with Antonio's utter alienation from her—is manifest.

J. Patrick Duffey argues that the literary close-up that appears in Ayala's avant-garde prose is an example of what Duffey (following Roman Jakobson) terms "synecdochic close-up": when the emotions and thoughts expressed by a body part in close-up communicate the inner state of the character to which the part pertains. As Duffey puts it, "External parts represent a larger internal reality" (159); "the part eloquently expresses the whole" (160). He gives an example of a hand depicted in close-up that seems to hesitate out of fear as it moves to open a door, and asserts that the emotions attributed to the hand are those of the hand's owner: "The 'fears' of the part, the hand, represent the fears of the whole, the character in the novel" (161).[43] Duffey's contention is that the close-up grants the viewer or reader greater intimacy with the character, because in witnessing the "emotions" of the isolated body part we are actually gaining entrée to the character's inner world. This argument is derived from the ideas of Balázs, who believed that the close-up—and film more generally—made inner life visible. In *Visible Man* (1924), Balázs declares, "In close-ups every wrinkle becomes a crucial element of character and every twitch of a muscle testifies to a pathos that signals great inner events" (*Béla Balázs* 37).[44] He later argued (in *The Spirit of Film*, 1930) that the isolation of a body part through close-up does not actually present the part as autonomous, because the viewer continues to picture the whole character: "For a hand, even if depicted in isolation, signifies a human being" (100). Drawing on Balázs's ideas, Duffey argues that Ayala's use of close-up in his avant-garde prose "is synecdochic, in that it reveals the emotional state of the character as a whole" (163). For Duffey, then, Ayala's frequent technique of isolating characters' body parts and endowing them

[43] Duffey draws this example from Azorín's 1929 novel *Superrealismo*.
[44] This statement, which is representative of the attitude toward the close-up that Balázs expresses throughout *Visible Man* and *The Spirit of Film*, would be directly contradicted by his 1948 assertion (cited earlier) that the human face "is rendered objective in the close-up" (*Theory of the Film* 60).

with emotions does not result in the impression that the characters are inhuman or devoid of subjectivity.

As I have demonstrated throughout this section, Ayala's use of literary close-up does not accord with the conception of the close-up that Balázs and Duffey describe. Throughout "Cazador en el alba," the depiction of female characters' body parts as autonomous is concurrent with the suggestion that the women are object-like. Their fragmented bodies, which appear to be composites of independent parts rather than singular entities, evoke the impression that they are not subjects with whom one can experience intimacy. The attribution of emotion to Aurora's body parts does not bring the reader—or Antonio—closer to her inner world but in fact has the opposite effect: the expressiveness of her hand or foot contributes to Antonio's sense that Aurora herself is absent and unreachable. Anatomical fragmentation ultimately plays the same role in "Cazador en el alba" that it does in "Polar, estrella." The negation of the continuity of Polar's body generates the protagonist's alienation from the star, as he is made aware of her status as a mere image. Similarly, literary close-up is employed in "Cazador en el alba" as an expression of Antonio's sensation that the woman he desires is "inaccesible, inabordable, y siempre en cierto grado de ausencia" (322). Literary close-up functions in Ayala's avant-garde prose in much the same way that he depicts cinematic close-up: as a vehicle of dehumanization that results in alienation for the desiring "spectator."

Given that all the people presented through the close-up in "Cazador en el alba" are objects of the protagonist's desire—beautiful women he passes on the street, prostitutes and his girlfriend—the story suggests a relationship between this mode of perception and desire. While it can be presumed that Antonio is attracted to all of these women, desire in any active sense is strangely absent from these scenes. The reader has no sense of Antonio's appetite for sexually

possessing the women, kissing them or putting his hands on their bodies: the descriptions of him being presented with the line-up of prostitutes and meeting Aurora on the dance floor are curiously passionless, detached from any excitement on the protagonist's part. The fragmentary lens through which Antonio views the women of the modern city appears to act as a barrier that exists perpetually between him and them, sterilizing his desire and draining it of potency. From his first encounter with women on the streets of the metropolis, in which the photographic advertisements framing individual body parts present them as amalgamations of separate components, Antonio's experience of desire in the modern city continues to be filtered through the lens of the close-up. This lens is one that augments aesthetic perfection, so that isolated body parts appear supernaturally beautiful and precise, while diminishing active desire. Antonio's perception of modern women as entities akin to Kracauer's chorus girls, thing-like and distant, obstructs not only his emotional connection with the women but also his sexual passion for them. In this story, alienation—the product of the close-up's dehumanization of the love object—is shown to be the opposite of organic, animal appetite for another body.

III. "Susana saliendo del baño"

"Susana saliendo del baño," Ayala's 1928 story of fewer than 300 words, illustrates particularly well the connection that exists for Ayala between the use of close-up to depict the body as a series of parts and the objectification of the depicted person. The text is not really a story but a description of a single scene—as the title indicates, of a woman getting out of a bathtub.[45] The banality of the scene and the total lack of action or character development make clear that the story's purpose is to highlight the descriptive techniques that Ayala employs, which

[45] The story is a reference to the Biblical tale "Susanna and the Elders," which, as Nigel Dennis notes, "describes how two respected elders from Babylon come to lust after the young and beautiful (and married) Susanna and spy on her lasciviously one day while she bathes alone in her garden pool" (107). Dennis and other critics also observe that Ayala's story alludes to pictorial representations of the tale, including Tintoretto's 1555 work that hangs in the Prado Museum.

occupy a prominent role in the text. To an extreme degree, Susana is presented through the literary form of close-up that appears in stories such as "Cazador en el alba." Several critics have noted the cinematic quality of this story's descriptive techniques. Montoya asserts, "En 'Susana saliendo del baño,' el cuerpo de una mujer desnuda es recreado plano a plano con un voyeurismo cinematográfico" (752). Similarly, Richmond describes the reader of this story as a voyeur led by "el ojo de la cámara del escritor, que le ofrece una serie de primeros y primerísimos planos" (20). According to Nigel Dennis, "The text consciously offers a cinematic rendering of the scene" (109). Indeed, the division of Susana's body into a sequence of images of enlarged, personified body parts makes an unambiguous reference to the cinematic technique of close-up. The hyperbole with which Susana is dehumanized—compared to an object and presented as devoid of subjectivity—is also impossible to ignore. Ayala's descriptive techniques portray the subject of this story as a foreign object, made of a strange, industrial-like substance and composed of a series of harsh geometric shapes. His use of literary close-up in this text is "photogenic," in Epstein's and Buñuel's sense of the word, in that it transforms and defamiliarizes the human subject so that she is unrecognizable as a human being.

Susana's object-like character is highlighted by the subjectivity that Ayala constantly attributes to the inanimate objects that surround her. The bathtub's taps watch her pensively,[46] and the tub has the "piel tersa" of a young female body (293). The water sings in her ears, multiplies her silhouette and wraps a green thread (presumably a strand of hair) around her throat.[47] Susana "era admirada del espejo, […] del rizado lavabo […] y del asiento" (293–294). The black soap resting on the sink is bored; the mirror smiles.[48] These descriptions emphasize

[46] "Los dos grifos de níquel […] miraban, pensativos, […] el abandono dramático de su cabeza" (293).
[47] "El agua […] cantaba en sus orejas. […] Temblaba en el baño para desviar sus formas; le multiplicaba cada perfil en líquidas ondulaciones, y cercenaba su garganta con un hilo verde" (293).
[48] "Se aburría un jabón negro. […] El espejo sonreía" (294).

Susana's inertness. The commodities and natural elements adjacent to her are active characters that perform actions on her—the taps contemplating her, the water strangling her, the mirror and other objects admiring her—while Susana herself is the passive object of these transitive verbs. The emotions of the objects in the room—the pensiveness of the taps, the boredom of the soap, the contentedness of the mirror—also underline the absence of any emotion attributed to Susana. In contrast to the objects that surround her, the reader has no glimpse of Susana's inner world; the text lacks any suggestion that she is a subject who thinks and feels. As Dennis states, "It is interesting to note how inanimate objects […] spring to life, becoming alert observers of, or active participants in the scene, while Susana herself is relegated to the status of mere object, mere spectacle of appearances, dehumanized" (108).

The close-up-like focus on Susana's individual body parts corresponds to the dehumanization of her body. Like Aurora during the sex scene of "Cazador en el alba," Susana is compared to a marine creature, or perhaps to the ocean itself: her hair is "algas verdirrojas," and her ears are "rosadas y tiernas caracolas" (293).[49] While the bathtub is figured as having human skin, Susana appears to be made of an industrial material: her neck is "metálico" (293). Her breasts are described as the two circular hemispheres that make up a world map.[50] Each of these descriptions employs the presentation of body parts in isolation that is typical of literary close-up in conjunction with comparisons of each part to non-human entities. As in Epstein's description of the face in close-up, the close-up serves here to make the human body unfamiliar and alien. The isolated framing of body parts appears to enable the transformation of a neck or a pair of breasts into strange objects that have no connection to human subjectivity.

[49] The images of both Aurora and Susana as sea-women whose bodies are merged with the ocean appear to reference paintings of Venus emerging from the sea, such as Botticelli's famous fifteenth-century work *The Birth of Venus*. The stories thus weave together ancient pictorial tradition—including, in the case of "Susana saliendo del baño," paintings depicting the Biblical tale of Susanna—with ultra-modern cinematic technique.
[50] "Sobre el pecho —hoja del mapamundi— dos hemisferios temblorosos con agua y carmín" (293).

The lens of close-up further removes Susana's body from the human context as each body part is figured in abstract terms. These descriptions, which emphasize the strange colors, textures and shapes of her body, present her body parts as foreign objects that resemble nonrepresentational sculptures. Her arm, rising out of the water, is "surcado de venas y chorreando"; her foot standing on the cork bathmat is "azul y rosa" (293). Both of these descriptions purposefully distance Susana's body parts from the familiar sights of an arm and a foot by exaggerating the textural and visual weirdness of the parts: her arm ridged with dark striations and shiny with moving water, the unnatural contrast between the blues and pinks of her foot. Similarly, Ayala figures her body as abstract and unfamiliar by portraying her body parts as simple geometric shapes: "el vientre en ángulo y las rodillas paralelas" (293); "los pies, apuntados triangularmente" (294). In each of these cases, Ayala achieves the abstraction of Susana's body by focusing on a single body part in isolation. Separated from the familiar context of the human body, a hand can appear as a soft beige mass with five long, flexible protrusions. The viewer of cinematic close-up or the reader of literary close-up can be made to forget his or her familiarity with the depicted body part and to see it as a bizarre object that he or she is encountering for the first time. The abstraction with which Susana's body parts are successively described recalls the presentation of Polar's body in the boudoir scene, which also employs the part-by-part description typical of literary close-up: the star's back is composed of "meandros voltaicos," and her legs are "surcadas, como el mapa, de venillas azules" (289). Ayala's descriptions illustrate Buñuel's assessment of the close-up as a vehicle for reducing the human body to a series of lines, shadows and geometric shapes.

One of the most obvious ways in which "Susana saliendo del baño" mimics cinematic close-up is by personifying body parts: while Susana herself appears devoid of agency, her limbs

and extremities are endowed with their own motivation and energy. Susana does not become the subject of a verb until more than halfway through the story: "Susana, pisando el agua, saltó una pierna sobre el borde" (293). Prior to this sentence, all actions are performed by individual body parts. Her arm and shoulder emerge from the water as if each part moved independently of any human subject controlling them: "Surgió un brazo"; "Nació […] la isla de un hombro" (293). Her five fingers appear to clutch a sponge on their own,[51] and her hand—not Susana directing the hand—caresses her body: "La mano adaptó su caricia húmeda a la curva del contorno" (293). The autonomy of Susana's body parts illustrates Doane's characterization of a part in close-up as "a for-itself" (91) as well as Epstein's assertion that body parts isolated by close-up "are elevated to the status of characters in the drama. Being dramatic, they seem alive" ("On Certain Characteristics" 317). The attribution of agency and life—of subjectivity—to Susana's body parts corresponds to Susana's own inertness. Her head hangs at an uncanny angle reminiscent of a corpse—"el abandono dramático de su cabeza" (293)—and her head and eyes are described unambiguously as lifeless: "la cabeza, muerta"; "muertos los ojos" (293). The deadness of Susana's head and eyes, the typical loci of subjectivity, strongly suggests her lack thereof. The animation of her body parts, like the emotions and activity attributed to the objects that surround her, serves to emphasize her object-like character by comparison.

"Susana saliendo del baño" contains only a brief, subtle reference to film—the mirror is an "elipse celuloide" (294)—but the presence of the cinema in this story is manifest through the similarities between Susana and the other women of Ayala's avant-garde prose who are described through close-up. Dennis notes that the gaze of the protagonist of "Polar, estrella" resembles that of the reader of this story: Polar's admirer dwells "languidly and erotically on her presence, 'feasting his eyes' on every detail of her movements in the same way that we are led to

[51] "Los cinco dedos, cinco raíces clavadas en la esponja" (293).

savour Susanna's" (113). He also observes the connection between the bathroom voyeurism of "Susana saliendo del baño" and Polar's boudoir scene, in which the star prepares to enter her filled bathtub: "Like the elders and the taps in the Susanna scene, [the protagonist] spies on Polar while she is in her bathroom" (113). Indeed, Susana bears a resemblance to Polar not only in the voyeuristic way in which the reader views both women but also in the fragmentation of their bodies. Like Polar's body, Susana's body is "disociado." Her body parts are figured as unconnected and distant from one another—"Arriba, la cabeza: mojada y trágica medusa. Abajo, los pies, apuntados triangularmente" (294)—recalling Polar's image sliced into two independent entities by the projector glitch. Susana also strongly resembles Aurora in the autonomy and abstraction of her body parts. Just as Ayala's narrator states of Aurora that "los mandos de su persona se reunían en otra cualquier parte de su cuerpo" and that "se le vaciaba de expresión la cabeza" (316), it is Susana's individual body parts rather than Susana herself that are endowed with subjectivity. Susana, like Aurora, is portrayed as an amalgamation of autonomous body parts that resemble unfamiliar objects. Literary close-up serves to depict both women as inhumanly lacking in subjectivity, just as the division of Polar's body into two close-up images causes the star to appear absent, inert and artificial.

Ayala's technique of literary close-up has much in common with a poetic technique that Walter Benjamin argued was central to the depiction of female bodies in the Baroque era: the description of the body in a part-by-part manner and the comparison of body parts to inhuman entities. Benjamin believed that this mode of description served to portray the subject as lifeless and object-like, even as it ostensibly exalted the woman's youth and radiance:

> The detailing of feminine beauties so dear to the poetry of the Baroque, a process in which each single part is exalted through a trope, secretly links up with the image of the corpse. This parceling out of feminine beauty into its noteworthy constituents represents a dissection, and the popular comparisons of bodily parts

> to alabaster, snow, precious stones or other (mostly inorganic) formations makes the same point. (*The Arcades Project* 79–80)

Benjamin identifies the role of anatomical fragmentation in conveying the sense that the woman thus described is uncannily inert. The description of each body part as an autonomous being, independent from the whole woman, is a "dissection" of the woman; this language recalls early film critics' statements that a star fragmented by close-up was "decapitated" or "legless." Benjamin's comments on the objectifying effects of part-by-part description articulate aptly the link Ayala suggests in his avant-garde prose between the close-up and the dehumanization of the filmed or described person.

Benjamin considered the poetry of Charles Baudelaire to exemplify the use of part-by-part description to imply deadness and artificiality.[52] Baudelaire's poem "The Splendid Ship" is an extended comparison of a woman to an elegant sea vessel, and it illustrates both the "parceling out of feminine beauty into its noteworthy constituents" and the figuration of body parts as inhuman that Benjamin identifies. Baudelaire extols each of the woman's body parts separately (her shoulders, her neck, her head, her breasts, her legs, her arms) and offers comparisons of these parts to commodities: her bosom is an armoire, and her nipples are shields.[53] He also endows the woman's body parts with life and autonomy: her head "parades itself," her legs are "like two witches who stir up" desire, her arms are "two glimmering boas" that "can crush their prey against your chest" (*Flowers* 107). Another poem, "A Martyr," describes a beautiful woman's body chopped into pieces and strewn about a bedroom, and is even more noteworthy in its similarity to Ayala's use of literary close-up. The woman's isolated

[52] Benjamin concludes the above-cited passage by noting, "Such dismemberment occurs also in Baudelaire: 'Le Beau Navire" (80). He later states of Baudelaire's poem "Une Martyre": "The allegorical intention has done its work on this martyr: she is in pieces" (349).

[53] "Your jutting bosom […] is a fine armoire / Whose bright and swelling panels might / Like shields reflect the flashing of the light; / Enticing shields, equipped with rosy tips!" (107).

body parts mingle with adjacent commodities, and the line between the two is blurred,[54] recalling Ayala's description of the scene of Susana in the bath as "una tibia aurora de carne y porcelana" (293). As in "Susana saliendo del baño," the personification of commodities coexists with the figuration of body parts as objects: while the bed linen greedily "drinks up" blood and a garter "hurls a glance that is cold and severe," the decapitated head sits "on the night table, like a ranunculus" (231). Like Ayala, Baudelaire attributes emotion and agency to individual body parts: "On the bed the nude torso displays [itself] without shame / And most lasciviously" (231). Additionally, he distances the corpse from the human context of pain and death by emphasizing the abstract aesthetics of the scene: "And yet, to notice the elegant lines / Of the shoulder lean and lithe, / The haunch a bit pointed, the turn of the waist" (231).

Baudelaire's use of part-by-part description resembles Ayala's utilization of the same technique to dehumanize his subjects, which is particularly evident in "Susana saliendo del baño." Like Baudelaire, Ayala presents body parts as agents in their own right that move with intention and display emotion. Both writers also reduce human subjects to an abstract amalgamation of shapes and colors: while Baudelaire enjoins the reader to "notice the elegant lines" of the macabre scene, Ayala draws the reader's attention to the foreign colors of Susana's feet and the strange angle of her stomach. "A Martyr" exemplifies Benjamin's argument that the dissection of the female body into its constituent parts "secretly links up with image of the corpse," as the woman presented through part-by-part description is literally a dead, dismembered body. Similarly, Susana appears dead as she is described through literary close-up: her head and eyes are "muertos," and her head hangs as if lifeless. The dehumanizing and objectifying effect of part-by-part description in Baudelaire's poetry illustrates the role of

[54] The poem opens by describing the woman's body parts as "surrounded by flasks, and by spangled lamés, / All matter of sumptuous goods" (229). Throughout the poem, the body parts are described with a similar level of detail and personification as the commodities, suggesting a fundamental equivalence between the two.

anatomical fragmentation in making a human being appear bereft of subjectivity. The invention of cinematic close-up greatly intensifies the effect of this technique, as Ayala's avant-garde prose demonstrates through its frequent use of literary close-up to communicate the object-like character of a person.

"Susana saliendo del baño," though exceedingly brief and nearly devoid of action, is a noteworthy component of Ayala's avant-garde fiction because it combines the lens of close-up with hyperbolic objectification. Susana's dehumanization is achieved through the same techniques that Ayala employs to present Polar, Aurora and other women as lacking in subjectivity: the fragmentation of her body into many separate parts, the presentation of her body parts as autonomous and an emphasis on the abstract aesthetics of her body. As the film theorists I have cited have observed, these techniques are those performed by cinematic close-up on the body of an actor. The "filming" of Susana's body through literary close-up serves to transform her from a human being with an inner world to an unfamiliar object composed of strange geometric shapes and body parts that act of their own accord. In other words, the narration of this story functions as the camera of a filmmaker practicing *photogénie*. "Susana saliendo del baño" encapsulates in its few paragraphs the role of close-up that Ayala posits throughout his avant-garde prose as a vehicle for extracting the subjectivity from a person.

* * *

In "Polar, estrella" and "Cazador en el alba," Ayala maintains an excruciating focus on the anguish of the person who contemplates and desires a woman presented through close-up. The former story centers on the agony of the spectator when the vision of the star's fragmented, dispersed body illustrates her status as a mere image; the latter text depicts in vivid detail its protagonist's feeling of alienation as his girlfriend transforms into an inhuman amalgamation of

autonomous parts. In "Susana saliendo del baño," there is no human character that contemplates her, but this text resembles the others in that the woman depicted through the lens of close-up is presented as an object of desire. As Dennis argues, the gaze of the reader on Susana's body is characterized by "the feverish voyeuristic pleasure of the onlooker" (113).[55] While the alienation experienced by the spectator or voyeur is not explicitly present in this story, the presence of observers who both desire Susana and view her as a series of object-like parts is implied. In the three stories I have analyzed, desire for an apparently real woman coexists with—and is contradicted by—the impression that the woman is artificial and devoid of subjectivity. The role of the close-up in these texts is twofold. The close-up furnishes the illusion of the desired woman's accessibility by presenting in great detail the features of her body, and it shatters this illusion by demonstrating the woman's lack of subjectivity and her incapability of sharing intimacy.

The epigraph that introduces this chapter quotes Epstein's articulation of the paradox of film: "If cinema magnifies feeling, it magnifies it in every way. Its pleasure is more pleasurable, but its defects are more glaring" (240). This comment addresses cinema as a whole, but it applies with particular accuracy to the close-up. Indeed, many film theorists consider the close-up to be the quintessential expression of cinema and to embody its most central qualities: Balázs, for example, declares, "Close-ups are film's true terrain" (*Béla Balázs* 38). As Ayala's avant-garde prose illustrates, the close-up manifests film's contradictory nature as a medium that seems to bring desired people very near while also highlighting their fundamental distance. The close-up,

[55] Indeed, the Biblical tale referenced in this story is the paradigmatic enactment of voyeurism, as the lecherous elders spy illicitly on the unsuspecting Susana. In making the narrator's (and reader's) position that of the elders, and presenting Susana's body through cinema-like description, Ayala updates the Biblical story for modern times and alludes to the inherent voyeurism of film spectatorship.

like film itself, is a vehicle of both pleasure and horror, abundance and absence, intimacy and alienation.

Chapter Three

The Film Image, the Voice on the Telephone and the Illusory Lover: Pedro Salinas on the Double

Pedro Salinas's poem "Far West," about the experience of watching a western film, begins by exalting the miracle of the presence of American cowgirls and tumbleweeds in a movie theater somewhere in Spain. The cinema is presented as a magical force that transports West Texas and its inhabitants eight thousand kilometers away, defying the laws of space and time and greatly expanding the boundaries of the viewer's world. Yet this excited celebration of the power of film curdles into disappointment as the speaker belatedly realizes that the West itself is not present before him: he has been engaging with mere copies of the landscape and the cowgirl, uncanny doubles that have succeeded in masquerading as originals. In other poems from the late 1920s, Salinas reiterates the depiction of the film image as a sinister double that impersonates the real beings it reproduces. A related poem, "El teléfono," expounds the same theme by depicting the voice of the speaker's lover on the telephone as a copy of the woman that the speaker is pressured to accept as the lover herself. As in "Far West," this poem takes as its nucleus the contradiction between sensory evidence of presence—the near-sounding voice of the lover—and the concealed truth of her absence and inaccessibility to the speaker.

Although these poems may appear to focus narrowly on the specific topics of cinema and the telephone, they are surprisingly emblematic of Salinas's work as a whole during this period. In his books of poetry from the second half of the 1920s, *Seguro azar* (1924–28) and *Fábula y signo* (1931), and his collection of short stories *Víspera del gozo* (1926), the themes that

structure his poems on film and the telephone recur with notable frequency. The speaker of the poems about modern technological devices resides in a world in which the definition of presence has been radically altered and copies usurp originals. This is also the world that forms the backdrop of the poems of *Seguro azar* and *Fábula y signo* and the stories of *Víspera del gozo*. In particular, the depiction of a reality that is mediated by technology—the places and individuals presented in movies and the person whose voice one hears on the telephone—is echoed in the figuration of the female object of desire throughout these books.

"Far West" centers on the ambiguous presence of the western landscape in the movie theater in Spain: while a reproduction of the West is miraculously present in the theater, the actual land remains remote, unknown and inaccessible to the speaker. Throughout Salinas's books of poetry and short stories in the late 1920s, the presence of the lover is consistently depicted in similarly ambiguous terms. The beloved in these works often appears both "there" and "not there," apparently present before the speaker or protagonist but seeming to flicker with insubstantiality; she either remains just out of the protagonist's reach or is present but perpetually hovers at the edge of disappearance. The poems about cinema and the telephone also share with Salinas's other works of this period the figure of the double, copy or reproduction. In the poems depicting technologically mediated communication, the speaker lacks direct contact with the reality he wishes to access, and engages instead with a reproduction of that reality. In *Seguro azar*, *Fábula y signo* and *Víspera del gozo*, the double also occupies a central—and contradictory—role. The lover in these works embodies the flimsy qualities of the technological double: like the film image that disappears as soon as the screen fades to black or the telephone voice that abruptly vanishes when the line goes dead, the lover seems liable to dissolve into nothingness at any moment. The idea of the double is thus the source of the anxiety felt by the

poetic speakers and protagonists. Paradoxically, however, the double also functions as the solution to the central characters' anxiety about the ephemerality of the lover. In the face of the beloved's absence or impending absence, Salinas's male characters repeatedly seek reproductions of her that will serve as concrete, tangible substitutes for her that they can fully possess.[56]

In "Far West" and related poems, Salinas explores the new phenomenon of technologically mediated reality: the experience of learning to accept one-dimensional reproductions as substitutes for the direct contact with the world that one desires. The experience of technology depicted in these poems serves as a kind of allegory for Salinas's broader obsession during these years with the ephemerality and inaccessibility of reality. The hunger for permanence and solidity—for originals rather than copies—that the poetic speaker expresses in the poems about film and the telephone reverberates throughout his poetry of 1924–31 and the stories of *Víspera del gozo*. In these works, the figuration of the lover echoes the ambivalent attitude that the speaker displays toward the film image and telephone voice, which provide a facsimile of the presence the speaker longs for while withholding the essence of that presence.

I. The Technological Double: Illusions of Presence in the Movie Theater and Telephone Call

"Far West" is structured around a contradiction. In the opening stanza, the speaker's attitude toward the film image is wholly celebratory. Staring into the eyes of the American cowgirl onscreen, he marvels at the presence of a desert from a distant continent before him. Yet

[56] The role of the film image—and other kinds of reproductions—in Salinas's work during the avant-garde period is similar to the film image's function in Francisco Ayala's story "Polar, estrella" (analyzed in Chapter Two). For the protagonist of "Polar, estrella" as well as Salinas's poetic speakers and protagonists, a fiercely desired but inaccessible woman is made to seem available through the existence of a reproduction that the desiring subject can possess and control. As we will see, Salinas's speakers and protagonists encounter anxieties similar to those of Ayala's protagonist as they are faced with the insufficiency of the reproduction in fully replicating the desired woman's presence.

as the second stanza begins, his experience of the film image shifts. Rather than perceiving the onscreen image of the West as an indication of its proximity to him, he begins to see the film image as a deceptive illusion that masks a series of unpleasant truths: the West is unfathomably far away, the wind blowing onscreen has long since died, and he has no actual experience of the people and place depicted in the film. The presence and proximity of the West exalted in the first stanza are countered by the overwhelming absence and distance that the speaker perceives in the latter half of the poem. What links these contradictory experiences is the figure of the double, copy or reproduction. While the West, the cowgirl and the Texan wind are absent from the theater in which the speaker sits, they are seemingly present through the copies that impersonate them. In "Far West," Salinas presents the film image as a perfect visual double that, in its verisimilitude, usurps the beings that it depicts. The abrupt change in tone between the first and second stanzas conveys the speaker's belated, unsettling realization that he has been engaging with an automaton-like double masquerading as an original.

In the first section of the poem, in which the speaker excitedly exclaims over the exotic images onscreen, Salinas presents film as a miraculous, unprecedented phenomenon in which what was once inaccessible is brought within arm's reach. As Juli Highfill remarks of this poem, "It may be difficult for audiences today, so accustomed to sophisticated special effects, to imagine the thrilling expansion of the visible that occurred in the first decades of the twentieth century." The advent of film meant that "remote, exotic locales [were] now accessible on local screens"; as a result, "spatiality underwent an extraordinary development" ("A Sentient Landscape" 122). Indeed, "Far West" illustrates early moviegoers' experience of film as an expansion of not just what could be seen but of the very laws of time and space. The presence of images of far-flung locales and beautiful celebrities in small-town movie theaters across Europe

seemed to suggest that unique beings could exist in multiple locations simultaneously. The experience that Salinas depicts in "Far West" recalls Walter Benjamin's description of the broader public encountering photographic portraits of famous people for the first time, at Paris's international exhibition of 1855: "We can only imagine what it must have meant to that epoch suddenly to see before it, in so lifelike a form, the celebrated figures of the stage, of the podium […], who, up until then, could be gazed at and admired only from afar" (*The Arcades Project* 673). Just as the first viewers of photography were amazed by the sudden presence of idolized public figures mere feet from them, the speaker of "Far West" expresses awe at the magical apparition of a distant land in his local theater.

The first stanza of the poem emphasizes the speaker's belief that the cinema has permitted an entire world to be transported from its far-away origin to his own location:

> ¡Qué viento a ocho mil kilómetros!
> ¿No ves cómo vuela todo?
> ¿No ves los cabellos sueltos
> de Mabel, la caballista
> que entorna los ojos limpios
> ella, viento, contra el viento?
> ¿No ves
> la cortina estremecida,
> ese papel revolado
> y la soledad frustrada
> entre ella y tú por el viento? (*Presagios* 73)

The repeated "¿No ves?" serves to illustrate the magic of the cinema. Thanks to the movie theater, the speaker is able to experience in vivid, close-up detail a place that could otherwise only be seen following a grueling journey of several days. Here "Don't you see it?" is synonymous with "Look, it's there"; for the speaker of the first stanza, who is uninured to the visual doubling of photography and film, visibility is equivalent to existence. The first stanza also establishes the realness of the cinematic West by alluding to the mutual permeability of the

film world and the world of the theater. The "trembling curtain" in the eighth line may refer to the velvet curtain that traditionally frames a movie screen: the wind blowing across the Texas landscape lifts Mabel's hair before passing through the screen to ripple the curtain of the theater. This image, which partakes of an absence of boundaries between the world of the film and the world in which the film is projected, illustrates the speaker's sense that the scene depicted onscreen is actually present in the theater. The wind, transcending the screen to connect Mabel's environment to that of the speaker, is responsible for dissolving the solitariness of both the cowgirl and the viewer: "la soledad frustrada / entre ella y tú por el viento."

The illusion that the film image constitutes reality is confined to the first stanza. In the latter half of the poem, the speaker expresses his disillusioned realization of the gulf separating the onscreen images from the actual West:

> Sí, lo veo.
> Y nada más que lo veo.
> Ese viento
> está al otro lado, está
> en una tarde distante
> de tierras que no pisé.
> Agitando unos ramos
> sin dónde,
> está besando unos labios
> sin quién.
> No es ya viento, es el retrato
> de un viento que se murió
> sin que yo le conociera,
> y está enterrado en el ancho
> cementerio de los aires
> viejos, de los aires muertos.
>
> Sí le veo, sin sentirle.
> Está allí, en el mundo suyo,
> viento de cine, ese viento. (73–74)

While in the first stanza, the anaphora of "¿No ves?" functions to equate visibility with reality, the second stanza emphasizes the absence of all senses other than sight: "Sí, lo veo. / Y nada más

que lo veo." It is as though the speaker's perception has widened in scope to detect not only the miraculous visual detail of the cowgirl and the Texan backdrop but also their unnerving silence and intangibility. The repetition of this sentiment in the line "Sí le veo, sin sentirle" conveys the unsatisfying, insubstantial nature of the film image: it may be looked at but not grasped, smelled or perceived with any other sense associated with proximity. Whereas the optimistic "¿No ves?" celebrates the miracle of being able to see previously inaccessible things, the disenchanted second half of the poem conveys the idea that seeing is not equivalent to truly experiencing. These stanzas also counter the earlier suggestion of the mutual permeability of Mabel's world with that of the speaker. The wind, which in the first stanza seemed to blow through the screen and enter the surroundings of the speaker, is now understood to be wholly alien and unknown to him: "Ese viento / está al otro lado, está / en una tarde distante / de tierras que no pisé." The speaker has experienced neither the space nor the moment in time of the scene depicted onscreen. The wind is not present before him but rather "allí, en el mundo suyo"; it is not a wind of his own world but rather "viento de cine," pertaining only to the world of the film. The latter half of the poem is colored by bitterness as the speaker, in belatedly perceiving the insubstantiality and foreignness of the film image, also becomes aware of his own deception.

The most significant lines of "Far West" are perhaps the following: "No es ya viento, es el retrato / de un viento que se murió / sin que yo le conociera." The speaker's wonderment in the first stanza derives from his belief that what he sees onscreen is the West itself: Mabel, her horse and the tumbleweeds flying around them seem to have been transported thousands of kilometers to appear before the speaker. The above lines succinctly express the speaker's realization that he has been engaging with something other than the West and its inhabitants. What he sees onscreen is not a cowgirl and the American landscape that surround her but a *portrait*—a copy, a

reproduction—of these entities. The onscreen wind rustles tree branches that are "sin dónde" and kisses a pair of lips that is "sin quién" because the branches and the lips belong not to a real landscape and a real woman but to false, flimsy copies. The description of the cinematic scene as "placeless" and "peopleless" is illustrative of the conception of film that "Far West" offers: populated by apparently real beings but uncannily devoid of actual life. Salinas repeatedly emphasizes the deadness that is secretly lurks behind the film image's façade of vivid reality and presence. The western wind has died before the speaker has had a chance to encounter it, and this dead wind is "enterrado en el ancho / cementerio de los aires / viejos, de los aires muertos." This description of a cemetery in which dead entities, such as the Texan wind that has long ceased to blow, are forever trapped appears to be a metaphor for film. Salinas suggests in "Far West" that the cinema offers copies of dead things that masquerade as living beings. The sinister character of film lies in the contradiction between its true nature—as the territory of copies and death—and its claims to presence, proximity, reality and life.

Another poem from *Seguro azar*, "Cinematógrafo," echoes "Far West"'s presentation of the film image as a copy that successfully impersonates an original. The first several lines of the poem are an extended description of the "birth" of a film—a projector initiating the film on a blank screen—in terms that echo the Biblical story of Genesis. The blank screen is figured as the empty universe prior to God's creation of the world: "Al principio nada fue" (83). The hand of God pulls the projector's lever—"La diestra de Dios se movió / y puso en marcha la palanca"—and the film world is born: "Saltó el mundo todo entero / con su brinco primeval." These descriptions serve to provocatively equate the film world with the real world, as the unique event of Genesis is effortlessly reproduced by the projection of a film onto a screen. Salinas furthers this theme later in the poem by referring to the mechanisms of the cinema as "las máquinas

maravillosas / para correr, para volar, / para amar, para aborrecer" (84). Film replicates and performs such uniquely human functions as love and hatred, making human beings and the world they occupy no longer singular. The cinema so perfectly reproduces reality that the real world (represented by "the first day of creation") is humiliated and defeated: "El primer día de la creación / humillado, pobre, vencido, / se marchó a llorar a un rincón."

"Cinematógrafo" shares with "Far West" the idea of the film image as a copy of reality that, in its extreme verisimilitude, usurps the original beings it depicts. However, both poems end by declaring the inability of the film image to truly reproduce reality; that is, they ultimately assert the nonequivalence between copy and original. The final lines of "Cinematógrafo" present the real world declaring its uniqueness and non-reproducibility: the first day of creation realizes that "en la mano diestra llevaba / el primer corazón del hombre, / que era el último corazón" (85). The assertion that the "first and last heart of man" lies within the world created by God suggests that while the film image reproduces the appearance of a human being, it cannot duplicate his subjectivity—his emotions and inner life. Both "Far West" and "Cinematógrafo" thus partake of a contrast between the truth of cinema's inability to truly duplicate reality and the powerful illusion that the film image constitutes a perfect double of living beings.

This same contrast structures "La otra," a poem from *Fábula y signo* that, while making no explicit reference to the cinema, shares strong thematic similarities with "Far West" and "Cinematógrafo." "La otra" centers on a woman who decides to commit suicide. Strangely, she is endowed with a double—referred to as her "shadow"—and when she makes the decision to kill herself, she orders the shadow to die as well: "Dijo por voz eléctrica, / por teléfono, a su sombra: / '¡Quiero morirme […]! / ¡Tú cállate!" (113). The shadow, however, refuses to obey her: after her death, it impersonates her so successfully that no one notices that she has died. The

description in “La otra” of a double’s sinister usurping of an original—and in particular its ability to obscure the fact of the original’s death—echoes the disturbing role of the film image in “Far West” and “Cinematógrafo.” The similarities between Salinas’s figuration of the film image in the two previously analyzed poems and that of the shadow in this text suggest that the poem depicts a film actress whose onscreen image supplants her in her absence.

“La otra” places heavy emphasis on the public’s widespread acceptance of the automaton-like copy as a substitute for the living woman. After the protagonist’s death, her absence and death are registered by no one:

> Nadie lo notó. Su traje
> seguía lleno de ella,
> en pie, sobre sus zapatos,
> hasta las sonrisas frescas
> arriba en los labios. Todos
> la vieron ir y venir
> como siempre.
> No se le mudó la voz,
> hacía la misma vida
> de siempre.
> Cumplió diecinueve años
> en marzo siguiente: ‘Está
> más hermosa cada día’,
> dijeron en ediciones
> especiales los periódicos. (114)

In addition to the clear thematic overlap between this poem and Salinas’s other poems about film, my claim that “La otra” is about a film actress is supported by the references to the woman’s celebrity in the above-cited section: “everyone” observes her comings and goings, registering her outfits and facial expressions, and newspapers devote special editions to obsequiously praising her beauty on her birthday. As in “Far West,” in which the speaker mistakes a film image of Mabel for the cowgirl herself, and “Cinematógrafo,” in which the cinema so completely reproduces life that its images of human beings seem able to love and hate,

in this poem the cinematic double seamlessly takes the place of the original that it depicts. The shadow walks upright ("en pie, sobre sus zapatos"), wears the protagonist's clothes ("su traje / seguía lleno de ella"), mimics her smile ("las sonrisas frescas / arriba en los labios") and speaks with her voice ("no se le mudó la voz"). The lines "hacía la misma vida / de siempre" encapsulate the utter sameness that characterizes the transition from the woman's presence to her absence and replacement by the shadow. So fully does the public accept the double as an organic being—as the living woman herself rather than a superficial copy—that it appears to age in the woman's absence, turning nineteen when the woman has died at eighteen.[57] The poem's coda summarizes the deceptive power of the double: "La heredera sombra cómplice / […] los engaños prolongaba" (114). This statement applies equally well to the role of the film image in "Far West": the speaker's enraptured exclamations over the presence of the West in the first stanza of the poem are the result of his falling prey to the "engaño" of the film image's pretense to reality.

In all three of the poems I have cited, Salinas's depiction of the film image recalls the concept of the uncanny double. Theorists who have explored the fear of the double have identified this unease as being based in the inability to distinguish copy from original—that is, in the fear that the double may usurp its source without anyone noticing. In Otto Rank's classic work *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study* (1914), he employs Dostoyevsky's 1846 novel *The Double,* in which the protagonist is tormented by the constant apparition of a man who bears his exact appearance, as a quintessential example of the fear of the double. Rank quotes from the novel: "If the two of them had been placed next to each other, no one, absolutely no one, would

[57] The moviegoing public's attribution of the capacity to age to the film image (as well as its sycophantic worship of the star) constitutes an example of the humor that Salinas embeds into his poems about technology. Another instance of this humor can be found in "Cinematógrafo" when the sullen, humiliated first day of creation "se marchó a llorar a un rincón" (84). While these poems express seriously the potent mix of emotions that the new technologies provoke, they also contain a playful, tongue-in-cheek element. Salinas self-deprecatingly laughs at the predicament of the early user of these technologies, showing the confusion and naivety of the person not yet accustomed to devices that fundamentally alter one's experience of reality.

have been able to say who was the real Mr. Golyadkin and who the imitation, who the old and who the new, who the original and who the copy" (qtd. in Rank 30). The double provokes fear because it suggests an inability to separate two fundamentally different categories of being—original and imitation, living being and automaton, subject and object—distinctions that are necessary to our basic functioning in the world. In perfectly reproducing the appearance of a person, the double weakens our ability to use sensory evidence to recognize a unique individual as himself, and to differentiate organic beings with inner worlds from lifeless copies. In Sigmund Freud's famous essay "The Uncanny" (1919), he notes that the double is a primary source of uncanny fear: "Those themes of uncanniness which are most prominent […] are all concerned with the phenomenon of the 'double'" (234). The double induces the uncanny sensation in part because it embodies what Ernst Jentsch identified as the essence of the uncanny in 1906: "doubt as to whether an apparently living being really is animate and, conversely, doubt as to whether a lifeless object may not in fact be animate" (221).

In Salinas's poems on the cinema, the film image enacts the sinister phenomenon of the double by masquerading as the entity it depicts and subsequently displacing the absent original. This phenomenon is particularly present in "Far West" and "La otra." In the latter poem, the use of the term "shadow" to denote the protagonist's look-alike is highly evocative of the uncanny double: Rank observes that the figure of the shadow is a common literary trope used to represent "the double, which has become an independent entity and which always and everywhere balks the self" (11). The engagement with a film image as though it were a living woman in both this poem and "Far West" recalls Jentsch's assertion that the uncanny is based in a confusion of the animate and inanimate. Both Jentsch and Freud illustrate their theories of the uncanny through the example of E.T.A Hoffmann's 1816 story "The Sandman," in which the central character,

Nathaniel, has the belated and horrifying realization that the beautiful Olympia with whom he has been in love for some time is an automaton. The attitude of the speaker of the first stanza of "Far West" and the adoring audience in "La otra" toward the film image recalls Nathaniel's deception in that they attribute the qualities of an animate being—the capacity to gaze, express emotion and age—to an inanimate reproduction.

Since their inception, photography and film have provoked comparisons to an uncanny double that poses a threat to the original by usurping it. Mary Werner Marien notes that within a decade of photography's popularization, the medium "had become a symbol with a complicated meaning involving the idea of the double. […] Where before mirrors might have been used, now, photography was the commonly understood symbol of the uncanny" (13). This attitude is illustrated in N.P. Willis's article on photography from April 1839, the first published news of photography in the American press: "Now every thing and every body may have to encounter his double every where" (qtd. in Trachtenberg 62). Photography's ability to provoke uncanny fear radiated from its unprecedented status as an art form that not only *depicted* things but *replicated* them, creating images that were potentially equal (rather than subordinate) to the living beings that the camera captured. Geoffrey Batchen observes that the inventors of photography conceived of the medium as "a mode of representation […] that undoes the distinction between copy and original" (69). He cites the three men credited with the medium's creation—Joseph Nicéphore Niépce, Louis Daguerre and Henry Fox Talbot—describing the photograph in terms that figure it as a rival of the real world. Niépce presented photography as a "true copy of nature" (qtd. in Batchen 64). Similarly, Daguerre described the photograph as "a perfect image of nature" and asserted of his invention, "It is a chemical and physical process which gives [nature] the power to reproduce itself" (qtd. in Batchen 66). Talbot, having taken a photograph of a piece

of lace, recounted triumphantly "the story of observers unable to tell the difference between his picture of lace and the piece of lace itself" (68). The conception of the photograph as a duplication rather than a representation of reality—setting the medium radically apart from other mimetic art forms, such as realist painting[58]—underlies Willis's prediction that photography would spawn an army of doubles. As John Jervis puts it, when the original and the reproduction "move 'sufficiently' close […] then this produces a sense of the uncanny" (30).

Tom Gunning notes that photography in its early years was "experienced as an uncanny phenomenon, one which seemed to undermine the unique identity of objects and people, endlessly reproducing the appearances of objects, creating a parallel world of phantasmatic doubles" that existed alongside the real world ("Phantom Images" 42–43). Similarly, Jervis and Jo Collins observe that in early literary depictions of photography, "we encounter visions of a technologically generated autonomous world that threatens to replace this world" (6). Salinas's poems on the cinema repeatedly express this idea by presenting the film image as a parallel being that exists alongside of—and with equal status to—the original entity it reproduces. In "Cinematógrafo," film's duplication of the real world enables it to nullify the latter's singularity and thus displace it. "La otra" expresses the same theme: since the actress's film image perfectly copies her, it is capable of supplanting her, to such an extent that her basic ontological status (her death) goes unnoticed. Gunning understands the uncanny aspect of photography as the fact that

[58] The history of realist painting is, in fact, peppered with stories of works so lifelike that viewers claimed to be incapable of distinguishing reality from representation. Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz's book *Legend, Myth and Magic in the Image of the Artist* (1979) gives a brief summation of this history, providing anecdotes in which "the artist's product is mistaken for reality, […] the portrait is taken for what it portrays" (66) and stories of "works of art that were taken for living beings" (71). The Roman Pliny the Elder (AD 23–79), for example, makes reference to a painter so skilled that his works seemed to exist as organic entities in their own right: "It was impossible to tell the apples and grapes that Possis painted from real ones" (65). The difference between the phenomenon of original-copy equivalence as it occurs in painting versus photography is, of course, that in the former medium this phenomenon is exceedingly rare and exists as the expression of the extraordinary talent of an individual artist. In photography, the idea that the artwork exists on the same plane as the original entity it depicts is inherent to the medium, occurring equally in the work of a professional photographer and the most unskilled amateur.

"although mere images, photographs remain endlessly reproducible, able to survive the physical death of their originals." In other words, "Photography as mechanical reproduction may undermine identity through its iconic power to create doubles of an unaltering similarity" (67). The unease that runs through Salinas's three poems on the film image can be attributed to what Gunning articulates as the power of photography to undermine identity, to dissolve the claim of a person ("La otra"), place ("Far West") or entire world ("Cinematógrafo") to uniqueness.

The conflict in these three poems can be summarized by what Jervis describes as "the problem that seems to arise when the image, as 'mere' surface, seems to take on the features of depth" (14). To illustrate this problem, he quotes Elisabeth Bronson's commentary on Edgar Allan Poe's story "The Oval Portrait," in which a portrait of a woman appears endowed with lifelike qualities: "A sense of the uncanny is provoked when depth, the one dimension that differentiates model from copy, seems to have been added to the imitation" (qtd. in Jervis 14–15). The photograph or film image seemingly acquires "depth" when it appears to function as a subject rather than an object, as an entity with agency and an inner world of emotions, thoughts and intentions. This is the phenomenon that takes place when a viewer perceives the onscreen image of an actor to be returning his gaze; it is the illusion of intimacy with the film image.[59] As we have seen, Salinas's speaker falls prey to this illusion in the first stanza of "Far West," when he feels that his loneliness has been abated ("la soledad frustrada") by the presence of Mabel in the theater with him. The sense that a photograph or film image transcends the status of "surface" to acquire "depth" illustrates how these media can provoke both Jentsch's definition of the uncanny and Rank's of the double. The film image that apparently operates with agency and emotion induces Jentsch's "doubt as to whether a lifeless object may not in fact be animate"

[59] Marcel Pagnol articulated the sense that the film image gazes into the eyes of the individual viewer: "If Charlie Chaplin looks at the lens, his picture will look straight at anyone who sees it" (qtd. in Buck-Morss, "The Cinema Screen" 53–54).

(221). Gunning notes that early cinema triggered this sense of the uncanny through "its ability to animate the inert," to bestow life onto mere images: for many early film spectators, "the medium itself appeared like a magic trick, bringing pictures to life: 'Animated pictures'" ("Uncanny Reflections" 83). The illusion that the photograph or film image contains "depth" also exemplifies Rank's theory that the double becomes frightening when it is able to usurp the original: if a film image of a person appears just as lifelike and subjective as the person herself, what distinguishes the copy from the original?[60]

The unsettling deception of the film image that Salinas illustrates in "Far West" is twofold. First, as we have seen, the poem presents the film image as an uncanny double that impersonates and usurps the real beings that it depicts. The other aspect of the film image that confuses and disturbs the speaker is the contradiction between sensory evidence of presence and the fact of absence. The first stanza exalts the presence and nearness of the exotic West: the speaker's repeated "¿No ves?" serves to demonstrate the existence of Mabel and her surroundings before him, and the references to the wind's simultaneous presence in the film world and the world of the theater alludes to the West's close proximity. Yet in the latter half of the poem, as the speaker becomes aware of the factual conditions concealed by the film's illusion, he realizes that the West is not present before him but rather "está al otro lado, está / en una tarde distante / de tierras que no pisé" (73). "Far West" presents the film image as deceptive because of the contradiction it embodies between extreme distance—the eight thousand kilometers and an unknown amount of time that separates the western scene from the theater in

[60] The surface/depth distinction that Bronson and Jervis articulate is relevant to Salinas's assertion in the latter half of "Cinematógrafo" that the film image perfectly reproduces the world in every way except that it lacks "the heart of man." The world created by God ultimately retains its uniqueness because it alone is endowed with depth, that is, the emotions and interiority that separate subjects from objects. The film world, while displaying an illusion of depth (the capacity to "amar" and "aborrecer"), is limited to the status of surface and thus is incapable of displacing the real world.

which the speaker watches the film—and a sensory experience so richly detailed that it seems to constitute undeniable proof of proximity. The abrupt contrast between the speaker's credulity toward the film image in the first stanza and his assertions of its falseness in the rest of the poem generates an unpleasant sense that his senses are insufficient to the task of distinguishing real presence from simulated presence; the technological innovations of the early twentieth century have robbed the speaker of his ability to determine when something, or someone, is actually present before him.

In a poem from *Fábula y signo* titled "El teléfono," Salinas returns to this same theme through the figure of the telephone:

> Estabas muy cerca. Sólo
> nos separaban diez ríos,
> tres idiomas, dos fronteras:
> cuatro días de ti a mí.
> Pero tú te me acercabas
> —circos azules del aire—
> con el tonelete blanco,
> en la mano el balancín,
> sonriente en el alambre.
> Por el alambre, en la noche,
> sin ver nada, te acercabas,
> a oscuras, derecha, a mí.
> Me decías: 'Aquí estoy.
> Aquí.'
>
> Me llegabas,
> en alambre, por tu voz.
> El mundo era, aquí, tu voz.
> ¡Qué ojos sin color, qué boca
> sin trazo, qué carne ausente,
> de lo blanco, de lo rosa,
> qué tú deshecha, tu voz!
> Te empezabas a morir
> en la soledad, de noche,
> de distancias, de no ver.
> En ser ya sólo una voz,
> desde lejos, por el aire,
> te empezabas a morir.

Y todo, todo en el aire,
tú en unas tierras, aquí,
yo en unas tierras, allí,
tan de color de distancia,
tan azules, que eran cielos.
Todo por el aire: aquel
jirón tan desesperado
de ti, tu voz, por el aire.
Por el aire los alambres
en donde ibas a callar.
En donde ibas a morirte.
Porque no te morirías,
ninfa ahora, en fabulosa
hierba de mito. Sí en cama
de acero tenso, en alambre,
por el aire,
al callar te morirías,
tú, vividora en tu voz. (140–141)

The first lines of the poem succinctly restate the contrast that divides the first stanza of "Far West" from the rest of the poem. Just as the anaphora of "¿No ves?" in the earlier poem serves to convey the presence and proximity of the West, the opening line of "El teléfono"—"Estabas muy cerca"—establishes the illusion of closeness that the telephone furnishes. The speaker's disillusionment in the second half of "Far West" is paralleled here by a description of the immense distance that actually separates the speaker from his lover: "Nos separaban diez ríos, / tres idiomas, dos fronteras: / cuatro días de ti a mí." The correspondence between the contradiction that structures "Far West" and that of this poem is striking: the speakers of both texts are unsettled by the disconnect between a sensory experience that unambiguously suggests proximity and their knowledge of the actual remoteness of what they see or hear. In "El teléfono," the explicit recognition of this contradiction at the beginning of the poem communicates that the speaker's conscious knowledge of the telephone's deception does not inoculate him against its effects. Although he is intellectually aware that his lover is not as close

as she seems, the intermingling of illusion and fact will continue to unnerve him throughout the poem.

The many affirmations of the lover's nearness serve to equate the presence of her voice on the phone with the presence of the woman: "Tú te me acercabas"; "Por el alambre […] / te acercabas / […] a mí"; "Me decías: 'Aquí estoy. / Aquí.'" In reality, of course, the distance between the speaker and his lover has not reduced; it is only her voice, carried electronically, that reaches him. However, it is significant that the poem does not distinguish between the lover and her voice as separate entities that are subject to different laws of spatiality—Salinas does not write "*tu voz* me acercaba"—but rather treats the voice as though it were the woman herself. In this way, the lover's voice on the telephone recalls the role of the film image in Salinas's poems on the cinema: as a double that impersonates and usurps the beings it depicts. In "El teléfono" as in "La otra" and "Far West," the actual absence or distance of a desired woman is concealed by the presence of a copy. Although the telephone voice is not a reproduction in the mode of the film image, Salinas's similar treatment of the two technologies seems to argue that both the telephone and the cinema attempt to pass off a one-dimensional copy of reality for reality itself. As José Cirre remarks of Salinas's poem, "El teléfono […] nos entrega una estampa acústica" (83–84).

In "Far West," the speaker's initial delight at his ability to see an exotic, previously inaccessible place eventually morphs into disappointment over the absence of all other senses. An identical transition takes place in "El teléfono" as the focus of the poem shifts from the miraculous nearness of the voice to the dearth of non-aural sensory evidence of the lover. The lines "¡Qué ojos sin color, qué boca / sin trazo, qué carne ausente / de lo blanco, de lo rosa / qué tú deshecha, tu voz!" evocatively convey the sinister absence of the lover's tangible body: the

speaker perceives the ghostly lack of her colorful irises, the outline of her lips, her white and pink flesh. Again, the overlap between this poem and "Far West" is conspicuous. The above-cited lines as well as the poignant "aquel / jirón tan desesperado / de ti, tu voz" express the exact sentiment of the speaker's disillusionment in "Far West": "Sí, lo veo. / Y nada más que lo veo"; "Sí le veo, sin sentirle." The speaker's recognition of the sensory paucity of his lover in "El teléfono" could be expressed as "Sí, te oigo. Y nada más que te oigo." Similarly, the shred ("jirón") of sensory experience with which the speaker of "El teléfono" must content himself describes equally well the fragment of Texas that is available to the speaker of "Far West," as the sensory abundance of reality is reduced to the merely visual.

In spite of the miraculous clarity of the lover's voice, the speaker's inability to perceive her through any sense other than sound causes him to become uncomfortably aware of her absence and insubstantiality. The repeated emphasis on their reliance on thin air for contact—"Y todo, todo en al aire"; "Todo por el aire"—not only illustrates the fact that the speaker cannot touch the lover but suggests a quality of airiness or ephemerality in her: she seems incorporeal, unable to be concretely grasped. The speaker's growing awareness of his lover's inaccessibility has the effect of the life seeming to drain out of her: "Te empezabas a morir / en la soledad, de noche, / de distancias, de no ver. / En ser ya sólo una voz, / desde lejos, por el aire, / te empezabas a morir." Importantly, it is not that the speaker begins to rely less on the telephonically conveyed voice as a substitute for the lover, but that the woman herself is seemingly made less real—less animate and tangible—as he perceives the insubstantiality of the voice. The distance, solitude and one-dimensionality that characterize the speaker's relationship to the telephone voice are transposed onto his relationship with his lover.

The poem's ending reinforces the idea that the ethereal qualities of the telephone voice have made the lover seem liable to vanish into nothingness at any moment: "Por el aire los alambres / en donde ibas a callar. / En donde ibas a morirte. / […] Te morirías / […] en cama / de acero tenso, en alambre, / por el aire, / al callar te morirías, / tú, vividora en tu voz." The technology of the telephone has persuaded the speaker to accept a disembodied voice as a substitute for his flesh-and-blood lover. The benefit of this illusion, as in "Far West," is the extraordinary expansion of the boundaries of spatiality: a desert eight thousand kilometers away or a woman two countries over can be summoned effortlessly and instantaneously. Yet, as Salinas illustrates in "El teléfono," these technologically mediated beings can disappear as suddenly as they arrive. The speaker's fear in the last lines of the poem lies in his realization that if the lover "lives in her voice"—if the existence of her voice on the telephone is equivalent to the existence of the woman herself—then she will perish as soon as the line goes dead. (In "Cinematógrafo," Salinas alludes briefly to this experience of the film image when he describes the screen going black at the end of the film as "el mundo entero perdido" [85]. If the film world supplants the real world, he suggests, then the inevitable disappearance of the film is experienced not as the quotidian conclusion of a performance but as the evaporation of an entire world: a terrifying experience of apocalypse.) In "El teléfono," the "double" of the lover in the form of her voice on the telephone is both a comforting means of summoning the presence of a desired person at will and a source of anxiety, in that this new form of presence is fragile and ephemeral.

Salinas's poems on film and the telephone identify a defining characteristic of many of the technological innovations of the early twentieth century: the altered concept of presence that these technologies furnished. In his book *Haunted Media*, Jeffrey Sconce describes the simulated presence—the feeling of proximity to an absent entity—to which middle-class consumers of the

early twentieth century were introduced. The simultaneity of the telegraph "allowed for temporary immediacy amid spatial isolation and brought psychical connection in spite of physical separation" (7). Wireless radio, similarly, "presented a paradox: alone at their crystal sets and radios, listeners felt an electronic kinship with an invisible, scattered audience, and yet they were also acutely aware of the incredible distances involved in this form of communication that ultimately reaffirmed the individual listener's […] isolation" (62). Sconce's articulation of the contradiction between actual isolation and illusions of company that serves as the foundation to technologies like the telegraph and wireless is the same contradiction that Salinas illustrates in "Far West" and "El teléfono." In Salinas's poems, the illusion of contact with and proximity to a far-away person is initially thrilling: the moviegoer or telephone user is made to feel less alone ("la soledad frustrada") by the sensory evidence of nearness to another individual. Yet Sconce's assertion that the wireless listener's acute awareness of the falseness of this illusion ultimately served to reinforce his isolation is also reflected in Salinas's poems. The speaker of "Far West" realizes with bitterness that the western wind "está al otro lado, está / en una tarde distante / de tierras que no pisé" (73), while in "El teléfono," the illusion of the lover's nearness gives way to the truth of her "absent flesh."

Of television, Sconce writes, "The introduction of electronic vision brought with it intriguing new ambiguities of space, time and substance. […] Television appeared at once visibly and materially 'real' even as viewers realized it was wholly electrical and absent" (126). The medium was thus defined by "paradoxes of visual presence": "the indeterminacy of the animate and inanimate, the real and the unreal, the 'there' and the 'not-there'" (127). The speakers of "Far West" and "El teléfono" grapple with these same ambiguities and paradoxes. The moving images of the West and the telephonic voice of the lover are experienced as

simultaneously real and false, animate and yet something less than alive; the confluence of, as Sconce puts it, "the 'there' and the 'not-there'" succinctly describes the technologically mediated realities with which the speakers of both poems engage. Salinas's poems about film and the telephone identify "the changing articulations of 'presence'" (Sconce 127) occasioned by the advent of technological communication—of interaction with something other than a flesh-and-blood individual that one can touch and smell. The speakers of these poems struggle to reconcile the sensory experience provided by the film image and the telephone voice with their knowledge that what they see and hear is not truly present before them.

As we have seen, Salinas's texts on film and the telephone approach the concept of technologically simulated presence through the figure of the double or copy: the poems partake of a duality between an absent, inaccessible reality and a simulacrum of that reality whose presence the speaker can summon at will. These poems anticipate Walter Benjamin's comments on technological reproduction in the 1930s. In Salinas's work, the role of the technological double is to provide a simulated form of presence that is ultimately unsatisfying because it lacks the permanence and solidity of a real being. This resembles Benjamin's argument that the technological reproduction perfectly mimics the original in every way except that it lacks aura; "aura" is Benjamin's term for the non-reproducible element of an original. In his 1931 essay "A Short History of Photography," Benjamin articulates his theory of aura at length:

> What is aura? A particular web of space and time: the unique manifestation of a distance, however near it may be. To follow, while reclining on a summer's noon, the outline of a mountain range on the horizon or a branch, which casts its shadow on the observer until the moment or the hour partakes of their presence—this is to breathe in the aura of these mountains, of this branch. Today, people have as passionate an inclination to bring things close to themselves […] as to overcome uniqueness in every situation by reproducing it. Every day the need grows more urgent to possess an object in the closest proximity, through a picture or, better, a reproduction. And the reproduction […] distinguishes itself unmistakably from

> the picture. Uniqueness and permanence are as closely intertwined in the latter as transitoriness and reproducibility in the former. (20–21)

Benjamin states the nucleus of the definition of aura at the beginning of this passage: "a particular web of space and time." The aura of an object—what gives it its "uniqueness and permanence"—is its existence in a singular moment and place. To experience the aura of a mountain range or tree branch is to perceive them as bound to the landscape and moment in time in which they are rooted; it is to notice the specific shadow cast by the branch at noon, and to be aware that the mountain exists only in this location and will disappear from the viewer's sight when he walks away. In "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility" (1939), Benjamin reiterates the centrality of "a particular web of space and time" to the concept of aura. Aura, the element that distinguishes an original from a reproduction, is based in the quality of "here and now" that characterizes the former: "In even the most perfect reproduction, *one* thing is lacking: the here and now of the work of art—its unique existence in a particular place" (253); "The here and now of the original underlies the concept of its authenticity" (253).

In contrast to the original, a reproduction is not bound to a particular time and space; it lacks the "here and now" that underlies the concept of aura. Benjamin asserts in "A Short History" that the reproduction responds to the desire of people "to bring things close to themselves" and "to possess an object in the closest proximity." This is the desire to overcome the immobility and time-bound nature of the mountain range and tree branch, to experience their presence at any moment and in any place. He further illustrates this concept in "The Work of Art": the reproduction "enables the original to meet the recipient halfway, whether in the form of a photograph or in that of a gramophone record. The cathedral leaves its site to be received in the studio of an art lover; the choral work performed in an auditorium or in the open air is enjoyed in a private room" (254). The reproduction defies the laws of space and time by allowing something

that exists only in a particular place (a cathedral) or at a specific moment (a performance of music by a choir) to be transported to the location and present moment of any individual. Unlike the original cathedral and choral performance, the photograph and the gramophone record may be carried with the viewer or listener wherever he goes and enjoyed at the moment of his choosing.

Benjamin's articulation of the motivations driving the modern desire for reproductions as well as his comments on what is lost in the reproduction are relevant to the conflict that structures "Far West" and "El teléfono." The speakers of Salinas's poems turn to film and the telephone in order to "bring things close to themselves," "to possess an object" that is frustratingly out of reach. The reproduction allows the speaker of "El teléfono" to overcome the physical distance of the lover and that of "Far West" to vanquish the remoteness in both space and time of the western scene. In "The Work of Art," Benjamin asserts that the technological reproduction converts a unique object or experience into an infinite number of identical and equal entities: "By replicating the work many times over, [the technology of reproduction] substitutes a mass existence for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to reach the recipient in his or her own situation, it actualizes that which is reproduced" (254). In "Far West," a unique existence—Mabel and the American West that surrounds her—is transformed into a mass existence through the technology of the cinema. Once filmed, the West no longer exists only in Texas but also, through its innumerable copies, in movie theaters throughout the industrialized world. Benjamin's statement that technological reproducibility "actualizes that which is reproduced" is illustrated in the credulity that the speaker displays toward the film image in the first stanza of the poem. To actualize the reproduction is to award it the status of the real, to accept the presence of the reproduction as the presence of the original being—in other

words, it is to affirm the equivalence of copy and original. This attitude toward the copy is reflected in the speaker's embrace of the film image in the first stanza of "Far West" and in the seamless substitution of the double for the original in "La otra."

As Salinas's poems show, the miraculous power of technological reproduction does briefly allow one to overcome distance and "possess" what was formerly inaccessible: the exotic West is brought within arm's reach, the film actress's image survives her death, the lover's voice is "muy cerca" in spite of her great distance. However, the pessimism of these poems overpowers their moments of optimism; they ultimately underline the inaccessibility of the desired people and places that the reproduction purports to bring near. In "Far West," after the speaker's unsettling realization that he has been engaging with a copy impersonating an original, the West seems farther away, and more foreign to the speaker, than ever before. A similar process takes place in "El teléfono," as the speaker's sense of his lover's inherent ephemerality and inaccessibility is occasioned by the convincing illusion of her presence that the telephone provides. Benjamin states that the reproduction is capable of duplicating every aspect of the original other than its aura: the film actor as he appears onscreen lacks aura because "the aura is bound to his presence in the here and now. There is no facsimile of the aura" (260). The fundamental absence of aura in the reproduction combined with the belief that the reproduction *is* the original—the actualization of the copy that Benjamin identifies—generates the sense, in poems like "Far West" and "El teléfono," that the existence of the reproduction siphons the aura from the original being. After engaging with facsimiles of the West and the lover, the speakers of Salinas's poems are plagued by the feeling that the originals themselves are now less present, less endowed with the quality of "the here and now."

Eduardo Cadava notes that Benjamin's treatises on photography and other forms of technological reproduction identify this sense of withdrawal of the reproduced being: "If the desire to 'bring things closer' implies a desire for immediacy and presence, [Benjamin suggests that] this wish to abolish distance only leads to more distance" (xxvi). In his comments on aura, Benjamin attributes the quality of distance to the original and that of nearness to the reproduction: aura is "the unique manifestation of distance," while the copy responds to the desire "to possess an object in the closet proximity" ("A Short History" 20). This is because, as noted earlier, an original entity such as a mountain range, cathedral or choral performance may not be removed from the particular time and place to which they are bound, whereas a reproduction travels in order "to meet the recipient halfway" ("The Work of Art" 254). The viewer's relationship to a photograph of the mountain is thus one of proximity, and his relationship to the mountain itself is marked by distance. However, as Cadava asserts, the concept of aura implies a more fundamental association of distance with the reproduction. As he puts its, "If the distance of an event is reduced through the various technical media that […] bring the event to us, at the same time, everything is more distant than ever before. […] What we are brought closer to is the event's reproduction. What we are brought closer to, that is, is something other than the event" (xxv). In the age of ubiquitous reproduction, people are granted constant proximity to far-away people, places and events. Yet this proximity is simulated: in consists of nearness not to the original entities themselves but to reproductions—facsimiles, copies, doubles—that masquerade as originals. The interplay between simulated presence and actual absence generates what Sconce refers to as "the changing articulations of 'presence'" and "the indeterminacy of […] the 'there' and the 'not-there'" (127) that characterizes the early twentieth century. Cadava similarly states that photographic and filmic media are founded on an

"oscillation […] between distance and proximity"; their "structure consists in the simultaneous reduction and maximization of distance" (xxv). When the concepts of presence and proximity are tainted by the simulated "presence" and "proximity" of technological reproductions, even a real entity that is truly close at hand seems tinged with insubstantiality and remoteness.

"Far West," "Cinematógrafo" and "La otra" center on the experience of film watching. While all three poems present film's duplication of reality in a sinister light, the emotional impact of the film image's falseness is dulled by the fact that the images presented to the audience depict entities that are unknown to them in real life. "El teléfono" constitutes a significant deepening of the theme established in the previous three poems in that it applies the phenomenon of technological reproduction to the speaker's intimate relationship. In this poem, the speaker contemplates the doubling not of a western scene or a famous actress but of his own lover. We witness real life—not just a work of art—being affected by the loss of aura that characterizes technologically mediated reality. "El teléfono" thus functions as a bridge between Salinas's poems that explicitly address modern technology and those that allude to technological reproduction in a more oblique way, through the depiction of the lover in terms that suggest simulated presence and copies impersonating originals. In the section to follow, I will examine the presence of the qualities Salinas associates with the film image and telephone voice in the poems addressed to a romantic *tú* in *Seguro azar* and *Fábula y signo*.

II. "Lo que veo de ti, cuerpo, es sombra, engaño": The Ephemeral Lover in *Seguro azar* and *Fábula y signo*

Benjamin posits that a general diminishing of aura is a defining characteristic of the era of technological reproduction. In an age of widespread reproduction, the absence of aura in photographs and reproduced artworks spreads to contaminate life itself, such that even unique

beings appear to exhibit the qualities of copies: "The prizing of its object from its shell, the destruction of its aura is the mark that the sense of sameness of things in the world has grown to such an extent that by means of reproduction even the unique is made to yield up its uniqueness" ("A Short History" 20–21). In "The Work of Art," he makes a similar point through describing the mode of perception that dominates in the age of modern reproductions: "Changes in the medium of present-day perception can be understood as a decay in the aura" (255). According to Benjamin, the first decades of the twentieth century are characterized by the absence of the qualities that normally serve to distinguish originals from reproductions; life in this time period, he suggests, is affected by the idea of the equivalence of copies and originals. Salinas's collections of poetry *Seguro azar* (1924–28) and *Fábula y signo* (1931) reflect this characterization of the age of film, telephones and other technologies that provide a simulated form of presence. In these books, reality—represented through the figure of the lover—is frequently perceived as though it were a copy or facsimile; the speaker's contact with reality seems mediated by technological reproduction rather than experienced directly.[61] The fundamental similarity between the depiction of the film image and telephone voice in the previously analyzed poems and that of the lover in *Seguro azar* and *Fábula y signo* is that all lack aura. Like the onscreen American West and the telephonically transmitted voice, the lover in these collections is defined by her transitoriness, non-permanence and lack of rootedness in "the here and now."

Cirre remarks that "El teléfono" exhibits "un panorama de distancia y proximidad, […] ausencia y presencia, realidad y desrealización. Es decir, toda la gama de contrastes y

[61] Salinas's poetic speakers operate in a world marked by the presence of what Tyrus Miller terms "generalized mimetism": "a world where spectacle and simulacra dominate" (62), a world "which blurs distinctions between the subject and the object, the real and the simulated, the figural and the literal" (158). This is also the world of poems like "Far West": Juan Herrero-Senés notes that generalized mimetism suggests "a collapse in the distinction […] between what the movie screen showed and reality" (56).

oposiciones tan cara al poeta" (82). Indeed, the themes expressed in "El teléfono" as well as Salinas's poems on the film image are emblematic of the ideas and emotions that structure his poetry as a whole during this period. As Andrew Debicki puts it, among critics "there is a general agreement" that Salinas's early books of poetry "involve a questioning of external reality" (265). As in "Far West," which deals with a contradiction between apparent presence and actual absence, in *Seguro azar* and *Fábula y signo* Salinas obsessively returns to the idea that the truth of the lover's absence is concealed behind a convincing illusion of her presence. John Crispin demonstrates the prominence of this theme quantitatively: "Out of a total of 132 poems […], 29 have as their theme the ambiguous nature of reality: deceitful appearance vs. the real essence of things. In addition, the same theme is implicitly contained in some 20 poems which deal either with the elusive nature of love or with the ultimate inaccessibility of the beloved" (40).[62] Julian Palley concurs with the argument that the beloved in these books frequently appears as simultaneously present and absent, noting that "la ausencia-presencia de la amada" is a salient theme of *Seguro azar*. Even when she is within the poet's reach, she remains curiously inaccessible: "Ella está presente pero se le escapa al poeta" (34). The figure of the double or copy also recurs in these collections. As Vialla Hartfield-Méndez affirms, in *Seguro azar* and *Fábula y signo* there is "a marked development of the idea of a superficial *tú* behind which the 'real' beloved exists" (25).

A small number of texts from these collections subtly recall the poems on technological doubles by alluding to the difficulty of distinguishing between copy and original. "Mar distante" opens with the following lines: "Si no es el mar, sí es su imagen, / su estampa, vuelta, en el cielo. // Si no es el mar, sí es su voz / delgada, / a través del ancho mundo, / en altavoz, por los aires"

[62] Crispin's analysis here applies to Salinas's first three books of poetry: *Presagios* (1924), *Seguro azar* and *Fábula y signo*. For reasons of space and because *Presagios* has less in common thematically with the latter two books, I have excluded Salinas's first book from this study.

(115). The image presented here is that of a copy of the sea: a visual double ("su imagen, / su estampa") and an aural double (the recorded "voice" of the sea projected over loudspeaker). As in poems like "Far West" and "El teléfono," these lines involve a contradiction between the absence of the original being and a facsimile of its presence through the figure of a double. What the speaker sees is not the sea, but a perfect copy of its image; the noise he hears is not the sea itself but an indistinguishable double of its sound. Another poem, "Lo nunca igual," expounds this theme more directly:

> Si esto que ahora vuelvo a ver
> yo no lo vi nunca, no.
> Dicen que es lo mismo, que es
> lo de ayer, lo de entonces.
> […]
> ¡Mentira! Si yo ya sé
> que se murió todo eso.
> […]
> Que esto ahora
> —imposible identidad
> de un nueve con otro nueve—
> es otra cosa, otra tierra
> que brotaron anteayer,
> nuevas, tiernas, recientísimas,
> tan parecidas a aquellas
> que todos me dicen: 'Mira,
> aquí vivías tú, aquí.' (119–120)

Cirre points out that this poem repeats the theme of "La otra": Salinas presents us with a landscape "que no cambia a la vista y que, también, ha dejado de ser, reemplazado por otro tan similar que se nos antoja el mismo" (90–91). In "La otra" as well as "Lo nunca igual," "nos hallamos ante el engaño de un eterno retorno en el que lo único que verdaderamente se repite es la apariencia formal" (92). Indeed, the similarity between the two poems is striking. Both describe a visual double that supplants the original, and in both texts the double is successful in concealing the fact of the original's death. The anonymous others who insist that the imposter is

"lo mismo, que es / lo de ayer, lo de entonces" resemble the unsuspecting audience of "La otra" ("Nadie lo notó" [114]). Both poems characterize the double as sinisterly deceptive: in "La otra" the shadow purposefully prolongs "los engaños," while above, the speaker denounces the "¡Mentira!" advanced by the double. In "Lo nunca igual," the emphasis on the surface similarity between the imposter and the original recalls Salinas's three poems on the film image, all of which describe a copy that is perceived as authentic because of its visual mimicry of the original. The last lines of the poem, in which others assure the speaker of the equivalence between copy and original, echoes the lover's affirmation in "El teléfono" of the truth of the telephone's illusion: "Me decías: 'Aquí estoy. / Aquí'" (140).

"Lo nunca igual" depicts a disconnect between appearance and reality: while the speaker is certain that the landscape he sees is different from the one he knows, the visual similarity between copy and original seems to be proof of their equivalence. Salinas's poems about the lover frequently portray a similar contradiction between sensory evidence and reality. While the sensory information that the speaker receives from the lover—her image and her voice—indicates that she is present before him, he is plagued by the sense that this appearance is an illusion concealing the deeper truth of her absence. The opening lines of "La distraída" provide an example of this contradiction: "No estás ya aquí. Lo que veo / de ti, cuerpo, es sombra, engaño" (81). The speaker sees the woman's body in front of him but believes that this image is a mirage—"sombra, engaño"—in the mode of the film image. Indeed, the use of the terms "sombra" and "engaño" to describe the seemingly present lover invites another comparison to "La otra," in which a visual double conceals the sinister fact of the actress's absence from the world. In spite of the sensory evidence of the lover's presence, the speaker is sure she is not here but rather "lejos de aquí, donde estás / diciéndome: / 'aquí estoy contigo, mira'. / Y me señalas la

ausencia" (82). As in "El teléfono," in which the lover affirms her proximity to the speaker while being obviously absent, here the beloved seems to be "lejos de aquí" but states unambiguously that she is present.

The penultimate poem of *Fábula y signo*, "Pregunta más allá," returns to the theme of the speaker's paranoia that the apparent presence of the lover belies her actual absence. The poem depicts the speaker asking the lover for confirmation of her presence and being unable to trust her assurances: "¿Por qué pregunto dónde estás / […] si tú no estás ausente? / Si te veo, / ir y venir, / a ti, a tu cuerpo alto. // […] Y abres los brazos / y me enseñas / la alta imagen de ti. // […] Y te pregunto, siempre" (149). Again, the speaker is presented with sensory evidence of the lover's presence—he sees her "cuerpo alto" come and go; he contemplates "la alta imagen de ti" before him—but suspects that this visual information is illusory. This poem as well as "La distraída" echo "Far West" and "El teléfono" in that the lover, like the film image and the telephone voice, is characterized by a contradictory mélange of presence and absence. The lover whose body the speaker sees in front of him but who seems to radiate insubstantiality and remoteness embodies Sconce's description of technologically mediated reality as "the indeterminacy of […] the 'there' and the 'not-there'" (127).

In "Cinematógrafo" and "El teléfono," Salinas alludes to the propensity of the technological double to vanish suddenly. As the movie screen fades to black, the audience witnesses "el mundo entero perdido," (85), and the lover whose existence is reduced to her voice on the telephone will dissolve into nothingness as soon as the line goes dead: "Al callar te morirías, / tú, vividora en tu voz" (141). This depiction of the technological reproduction illustrates Benjamin's argument that an entity endowed with aura is defined by its "permanence," whereas the copy manifests "transitoriness" ("A Short History" 21). In *Seguro azar* and *Fábula y*

signo, the lover is often characterized by the transitoriness—the tendency to disappear inexplicably and without warning—with which Salinas depicts the technological double. In "Sí reciente," the lover's physical solidity in the current moment is overshadowed by the speaker's certainty that she will soon vanish: "Eres / tan cierto y mío, seguro[63] / de hoy, de aquí, / que tu evidencia es el filo / con que me hiere el abrazo" (97). Salinas places exaggerated emphasis on the lover's presence and the speaker's ability to possess her: her presence is "cierto," "seguro" and supported by "evidencia," and she belongs wholly to the speaker ("Eres […] mío"). Yet the evidence of her presence is upsetting because it belies her imminent disappearance: he anticipates the moment "cuando te vuelvas recuerdo, / sombra esquiva entre los brazos" (98). This final line of the poem evocatively depicts the lover dissipating into thin air even as the speaker holds her; it suggests that, like the film image, she is not subject to the laws of time and space. Audrey Gertz comments on this poem, "The physical reality and accessibility of the beloved becomes increasingly painful […] because of the intensity of the speaker's awareness that it is transitory" (160). As in "Far West" and "El teléfono," here the speaker is distressed by the convincing sensory evidence of a presence that he knows to be illusory and unreliable.

Other poems continue the depiction of the lover as transitory by emphasizing her ephemerality and the speaker's inability to possess her. "La sin pruebas" describes the speaker's certainty that the beloved is liable to disappear completely at any moment: "¡Cuando te marchas, qué inútil / buscar por dónde anduviste, / seguirte! / Si has pisado por la nieve, / sería como las nubes / —su sombra—, sin pies, sin peso / que te marcara" (146–147).[64] The eeriness of this

[63] Salinas's use of masculine adjectives to describe the beloved is likely due to the fact that she is addressed as "amor" throughout the poem.

[64] The repeated use of the term "sombra" to describe the lover—in this poem, in "Sí reciente" ("sombra esquiva entre los brazos") and in "La distraída" ("Lo que veo / de ti, cuerpo, es sombra, engaño")—serves to convey her insubstantiality and impermanence. It also suggests her status as a double or copy—recall Rank's observation that the image of a "shadow" is one of the most common literary symbols of the double.

description derives from the existential nature of the lover's disappearance: when she leaves the speaker's sight, she has not traveled to another location but dissolved into thin air. The speaker underlines the utter lack of a trace that will remain of her: "cuando no vivas más / yo no sé en qué voy a ver / que vivías" (147). The depiction of the lover as likely to vanish into nothingness, leaving no vestiges of her existence, suggests her status as something other than human. She bears more resemblance to the insubstantial technological doubles that populate Salinas's poems on film and the telephone than to a living, organic being endowed with aura.

Salinas's poetry from this period tends to respond to the frightening ephemerality of the lover in one of two ways. First, as demonstrated above, the poems often center on anxious declarations of the lover's imminent, unpredictable vanishing and the speaker's impotence in the face of it. The other way in which the speaker's anxiety is conveyed is through the opposite mode of expression: emphatic statements of his total ability to possess the lover and control her comings and goings. The poem "Busca, encuentro" begins by describing the inaccessibility of the lover—"No te veo, / estás dentro de la niebla"—but ends by declaring, "Yo ya te tengo. Mía. / Estás, estoy a tu lado" (99). The aptly titled "Tú, mía" contains the lines "Yo ya te tengo. / […] Quieta / estás, clavada en el sitio / donde te dejé de ver" (136–137). In "Amiga" the poet boasts of "tu presencia aquí, sí, / delante de mí, siempre" (105). In the vehemence of their claims to controlling the lover's presence, of grasping her concretely so that she does not slip away, these statements evince a fear of her disappearance.

Two of Salinas's poems in particular vividly manifest this desire to possess the lover through extended descriptions of a feminized object that lies wholly within the speaker's grasp and control. "35 bujías," one of Salinas's better-known poems from the avant-garde period, figures a light bulb as a princess locked in a tower that is guarded by the speaker. The opening

lines of the poem—"Sí. Cuando quiera yo / la soltaré. Está presa" (86)—illustrate the poem's theme: the electric light is completely within the speaker's domain, appearing immediately when he summons her and returning to her prison when he wishes. The figuration of the light bulb as the speaker's lover is prominent: she is his "amada eléctrica," she descends from the ceiling "a besarme, a envolverme / […] de amor," he and she are "amantes / eternos." The poem "Moneda" similarly depicts the speaker taking unusual pleasure in his ability to possess a feminized object. The first lines establish an opposition between the uncertainty and insubstantiality of the world that surrounds the speaker and the concreteness of the coin: "Será quizá porque hay niebla / por lo que yo te acaricio" (127). The poem goes on to praise the coin's reliability in a tone that strongly suggests its contrast to the ephemerality of other entities in the speaker's environment: "Te acaricio a ti, moneda. / […] Tú aquí en mi mano, tú, / contorno estricto, tú, dura / existencia resistente, / tu cuerpo de fina plata. / Moneda / con un número invencible / por la duda o por la niebla / y un rostro / que no dudará jamás, / de reina antigua, mirándome" (127–128). As with the feminized light bulb in "35 bujías," the depiction of the coin as a woman is conspicuous. The speaker "caresses" the "hard contours" of the coin's "body"; it has a "face" that "gazes" at him; he repeatedly addresses it in the *tú* typical of romantic poetry. It is clear that the appeal of this "woman" lies in her solidity and durability: "dura existencia / resistente," "invencible / por la duda o por la niebla," "un rostro que no dudará jamás." Just as the speaker of "35 bujías" exalts his ability to control the presence of the "princess," the speaker of "Moneda" takes comfort in the confinement of the coin "aquí en mi mano."[65] The obvious pleasure that both poems express

[65] It is somewhat ironic that these poems employ electric light and an item of currency as embodiments of permanence and eternal possessibility: light is inherently ephemeral, impossible to grasp concretely, and the nature of a coin is that it will travel perpetually from hand to hand. Salinas's use of these entities as symbols of the ability to wholly possess a lover perhaps expresses an unconscious knowledge of the futility of this aspiration.

in a concrete female form whose presence is predictable and controllable suggests a deeper anxiety about the ephemerality and insubstantiality of the lover.

A similar desire for solidity and permanence in the face of the lover's transitoriness appears to motivate the poems in which Salinas's speaker describes creating a reproduction of the lover in her absence. "Amada exacta" begins with an emphasis on the lover's presence before him that seems shot through with anxiety about the temporary and fragile nature of this presence: "Tú aquí delante. Mirándote / yo" (91). The speaker anticipates her disappearance and fearfully predicts the completeness with which she will vanish: "Si te marchas, ¡qué trabajo / pensar en ti que estás hecha / para la presencia pura!" To compensate for her absence, he will have to recreate her: "Todo yo a recomponerte / con sólo recuerdos vagos: / te equivocaré la voz, / el cabello, ¿cómo era?, / te pondré los ojos falsos." In "Vida segunda," the memory of the absent lover is extremely clear in the speaker's mind until one day it inexplicably vanishes. The speaker responds to this sudden disappearance by fashioning a double of her memory: "Y te tuve que inventar / —era en el segundo día— / nueva, / con tu voz o sin tu voz, / con tu carne o sin tu carne. / Daba lo mismo. / Eras ya de mí, incapaz / de vivirte ya sin mí" (131–132). Hartfield-Méndez notes of this poem that the speaker's reaction to the loss of the beloved "is to create a new *tú*" (78), a double that replaces her and makes her absence irrelevant. She also points out that the line "era en el segundo día" "refers to the Genesis creation myth in which God created man" (78). It is interesting to observe the similarity between this poem—in which the speaker creates a reproduction of his lover that seamlessly supplants her—and "Cinematógrafo," in which the film image is a double that impersonates and usurps the world. In both cases, the language of Genesis is employed in order to imply the status of the double as a natural being, that is, to assert the equivalence of copy and original.

The two poems cited above exhibit opposing attitudes toward the idea of a double of the lover. In "Amada exacta," the speaker laments the insufficiency of the double in replicating the lover's essence: he knows that the exact nature of her voice, hair and eyes will be impossible to reproduce. "Vida segunda," by contrast, celebrates the speaker's absolute power to duplicate the lover. Her actual presence is irrelevant—"con tu voz o sin tu voz, / con tu carne o sin tu carne. / Daba lo mismo"—and the new version of the lover is completely under his control: "Eras ya de mí, incapaz / de vivirte ya sin mí." The conflicted attitude toward the double that these poems together manifest is emblematic of the problematic status of the double throughout the texts I have presented in this section. The poems that portray the lover as frustratingly ephemeral, impermanent or illusory depict her in the same terms as Salinas does the technological reproduction in his poems on film and the telephone. In these poems, the double thus plays a negative role that is connected to the inaccessibility of the lover. However, as we have seen, in other poems Salinas's speaker turns to the idea of the double as a *solution* to the problem of the lover's inaccessibility. The double as described in "Vida segunda" is as easy to possess and control as the light bulb in "35 bujías" and the coin in "Moneda." Its existence is not dependent on the presence of the lover herself, so it provides an escape from the anxiety of her unpredictable disappearances and the speaker's unsettling sense that she is never truly present before him. In the following section, I will investigate this function of the double in Salinas's short story collection *Víspera del gozo* (1926). In these stories, which feature a lover who is equally as inaccessible as that of *Seguro azar* and *Fábula y signo*, the male protagonists fashion a double of the lover in order to compensate for her seemingly existential disappearances and attain control over her presence.

III. The Search for a Flesh-and-Blood Woman in *Víspera del gozo*

A fundamental similarity between *Víspera del gozo* and Salinas's poetry during the avant-garde period can be observed in the figuration of the object of desire. Just as the lover of *Seguro azar* and *Fábula y signo* is characterized by her ephemerality, insubstantiality and general inaccessibility to the speaker, the women of *Víspera del gozo* are tantalizingly located just beyond the reach of the protagonists. The central conflict of the majority of the stories in the collection consists of the protagonist being unable to make contact with the love interest—even when she is very near to him—or sensing with panic her imminent disappearance. María Pao observes that critics of *Víspera del gozo* "have focused on the missing, or at least long-delayed figure of the woman" (438), and Roberta Johnson notes that most of the stories feature "a human protagonist who is spatially and/or temporally separated from a desired woman toward whom he is moving in time and space" (175). As in "Far West" and "El teléfono," the stories of *Víspera del gozo* are marked by a contradiction between the actual absence of a desired woman and the illusion of her presence or proximity; the lover in this collection manifests the same ambiguity of presence that defines the beloved of *Seguro azar* and *Fábula y signo.*

As Gertz puts it, "The desire to possess the woman is the unifying thread that connects *Víspera del gozo* to Salinas's early poetry" (10). Indeed, the short story collection, like Salinas's avant-garde poetry, features male protagonists who respond to the inaccessibility of the lover by seeking a way to grasp her concretely. As in the poem "Vida segunda," the solution to the woman's absence is to be found in the creation of a double or reproduction of her. The protagonists of *Víspera del gozo* illustrate Benjamin's argument that the modern hunger for reproductions stems from the desire of people "to bring things close to themselves" and "to possess an object in the closest proximity" ("A Short History" 20). In "Far West" and "El teléfono," the technological reproduction functions to bring near a desired, inaccessible thing—

an exotic land, a far-away lover—and grant the speaker control over its presence. In these poems, the speaker is able to summon the presence of the West or the lover as easily as entering a movie theater or placing a phone call. The reproduction plays a similar role in *Víspera del gozo.* By constructing a double of the lover, the protagonists of this collection create a version of the woman that resembles the light bulb of "35 bujías": an object whose presence may be conjured at will. In the three stories I will analyze in detail—"Aurora de verdad," "Volverla a ver" and "Livia Schubert, incompleta"—the reproduction serves the purpose of possessing a woman who is frustratingly difficult to pin down and providing the protagonist with satisfying control over her presence.

To illustrate the ambiguous presence/absence of the object of desire in this collection, I will begin with a brief examination of "Entrada en Sevilla," a story about a man whose contact with Seville is limited to its image seen through the windows of a car. The protagonist, Claudio, arrives in the city at night and, when his car collects him in the morning, steps directly from the house in which he is staying into the car, such that he never sets foot on the ground of Seville. Claudio's lack of direct contact with the city—he experiences it only through tantalizing flashes of images—serves as a representation of the inability of the protagonists of *Víspera del gozo* to achieve immediacy with their objects of desire. The figuration of the city as a desired woman who remains just out of reach is conspicuous throughout the story. As Gertz notes, "The male protagonist's longing to explore and penetrate Seville corresponds to a parallel longing to possess a female body" (34), and "both the city and the woman represent inaccessible realities" (46). Claudio's sense of the inaccessibility of the feminized city is due to the fact that he perceives it only as an intangible series of images, giving it an illusory quality: "La ciudad, tan real, tenía un temblor de fantasmagoría. […] Estaba viendo Sevilla y aún tenía que seguir

imaginándola, y la ciudad le era, tan dentro de ella, algo incierto e inaprehensible como una mujer amada, producto de datos reales, pero dispersos y nebulosos" (*Víspera* 24). Even though the protagonist has physical proximity to Seville (he is "tan dentro de ella"), the city seems to tremble with the insubstantiality of a film image-like double.[66] It exudes the "indeterminacy of […] the 'there' and the 'not-there'" (Sconce 127) that, as we have seen, characterizes the object of desire in *Seguro azar* and *Fábula y signo.*

The Seville of this story also shares with the film image, the telephone voice and the lover of Salinas's early poetry the propensity to vanish unsettlingly. At the end of the story, Claudio is about to suggest to his girlfriend, Robledo (who is traveling with him), that they get out of the car and walk around—finally achieving the longed-for physical contact with the illusory Seville. Just then, Robledo drops her purse, and both bend down and spend a few minutes collecting her things from the floor of the car. When Claudio looks out the window again, he realizes with shock that they are no longer in the city. He experiences this as a sudden, inexplicable and disturbing disappearance: "Todo había desaparecido, […] vuelto acaso a la caja de engaños del prestimano, delicia huida" (25). "El asombro y el dolor de Claudio" are so great as to be impossible to articulate; he feels "la desesperación impotente y grandiosa con que el burlado egipán ve cómo se le escapa de nuevo la ninfa esquiva y deseada" (25).[67] The disproportionate emotional impact that the "disappearance" of Seville has on the protagonist illustrates the city's role as a representation of the ephemeral woman who dominates Salinas's work of these years. Seville resembles the lover of "Sí reciente" who vanishes from the speaker's

[66] It is possible that Salinas intended Claudio's viewing of Seville through the windows of a car to be read as an allusion to the act of moviegoing: in the first decades of the advent of both the automobile and the cinema, comparisons of the experiences of riding in a car and watching a film were so common as to become axiomatic.

[67] The hyperbolic emotion that the effects of the car provoke in Claudio is another example of the tongue-in-cheek posture of Salinas's texts depicting the new technologies of the early twentieth century. Although the story's ending is poignant and elegantly written, expressing poetically Claudio's feelings of loss and shock, it also seems subtly to laugh at its protagonist's (and, implicitly, Salinas's and the 1920s reader's) inability to adapt quickly enough to the new mode of reality engendered by the automobile.

arms even as he holds her ("sombra esquiva entre los brazos" [98]). The city also serves to symbolize the inaccessible objects of desire that populate *Víspera del gozo*. In Fernando Vela's 1926 review of Salinas's collection, he asserts that the purpose of "Entrada en Sevilla" is to "presentar una Sevilla virtual" ("Víspera del gozo" 128). Indeed, the version of Seville to which the protagonist has access resembles a technological double, providing Claudio with an insubstantial and transitory approximation of the reality he wishes to touch. "Entrada en Sevilla" is emblematic of *Víspera del gozo* in that it illustrates both the inaccessibility of the love interest—through the description of the city that always remains just out of reach—and the ultimately unsatisfying nature of the reproduction that is meant to provide a substitute for her presence.[68]

Although "Aurora de verdad," "Volverla a ver" and "Livia Schubert, incompleta" are marked by significant differences and contain many interesting elements that this study will not address, they are fundamentally similar in their adherence to the same structure centering on the figure of the double. Each story begins with either the absence or the impending absence of the lover. The protagonist experiences this absence as existential, that is, terrifying in its totality and permanence. He compensates for the perceived ephemerality of the lover by creating one or more physical doubles of her that serve as tangible, controllable substitutes for her presence. In all three stories, the protagonist's initial elation at solving the problem of the lover's absence eventually curdles into disappointment or fear as he realizes the insufficiency of the double in

[68] "Entrada en Sevilla" also alludes to the theme of the double through a passage describing Claudio's journey through the winding streets of Seville. As the car turns to the right, Claudio thinks the street they have been traveling on has curved, but he belatedly realizes that they have turned onto a new, different street: "Pero no: se había equivocado la vista. Esa calle fugitiva era otra y no la suya, otra que arrancaba de allí y se confundía con ella, toda igual y deliciosamente distinta, y por eso el corazón creyó que la perdía, dudoso y engañado como aquella mañana en que siguió a la hermana de la mujer querida unos instantes, por la semejanza a lo lejos, de sus siluetas" (22). The description of Claudio as "dudoso y engañado" after confusing the streets and the comparison of the experience to that of mistaking his lover for her visually similar double foreshadows the theme that (as we will see) prominently occupies this collection of stories.

replicating the presence of the woman. As José del Pino affirms, the role of the double in these three stories is representative of *Víspera del gozo* as a whole: "La materia argumental común en la mayoría de los cuentos trata de la reconstrucción imaginaria por parte de un joven enamorado de una amada ausente" (103); in most of the stories, "el joven protagonista va a reconstruir artificialmente para sí […] un objeto de deseo" (104). The ambivalence that these stories ultimately express toward the concept of a reproduction of the lover mirrors the conflicted attitude toward the film image and telephone voice that the speakers of "Far West" and "El teléfono" exhibit.

"Aurora de verdad" establishes in its opening paragraph the figuration of the lover as an ephemeral entity likely to vanish into nothingness without warning. Jorge awakes in the morning to find that his girlfriend has "inexplicably" disappeared from his side: "Lo primero que se encontraba, allí a su lado, enorme e impalpable, era la ausencia de Aurora. Ausencia por un momento inexplicable, ya que su amada estuvo toda la noche junto a él, más efusiva y cariñosa que nunca y no había motivo para que ahora, precisamente al abrir los ojos, dejara de verla" (41). He goes to his notebook and records the event: "A las ocho y media, pérdida de Aurora" (41). When he realizes that she has not disappeared but merely left him temporarily—the previous night they made a plan to meet that morning at ten o'clock—his relief at the recovery of his beloved is enormous: "Aurora, como uno de esos objetos que se nos caen de las manos, pero que logramos atrapar antes de que lleguen al suelo, parecía sin haberse realmente perdido" (42). The depiction of Aurora's highly quotidian absence from Jorge's bed as a frightening dematerialization is conspicuous and significant. What Jorge perceives as the disappearance of his lover resembles the sudden, existential vanishing that constantly threatens to befall the lover of *Seguro azar* and *Fábula y signo*. Aurora's absence is inexplicable, seeming to defy the laws of

physics ("no había motivo para que […] dejara de verla"). That her absence is contradicted by her liveliness the night before ("más efusiva y cariñosa que nunca") suggests that an apparently animated subject has dissolved in the manner of a technological double; Aurora has changed from a tangible person that Jorge can hold in his arms to an "impalpable" nothingness. Following his realization that she has not, in fact, disappeared, the description of Aurora as a solid "object" that can be grasped tightly in his hand strongly recalls the feminized objects of "35 bujías" and "Moneda." Like the speakers of these poems who draw comfort from their ability to control the presence of the light bulb and coin, Jorge's anxiety is greatly alleviated by his perception of Aurora as a stable object that will not dissolve between his fingers. As we will see, his belief that he is able to possess her and summon her presence at will is due to his creation of copies of her that he controls.

As Jorge walks to meet Aurora at the museum where they have planned their date, he assuages his anxiety about her ephemerality by perceiving doubles of her on the streets of the city. This tactic negates her troubling absence and makes her presence respond immediately to Jorge's desire to see her before him: "En cuanto salía al bulevar empezaba ya a encontrársela" (42). The doubles of Aurora are based on isolated elements from the image of her that he carries in his mind from her appearance on previous dates: a woman wearing a straw hat that resembles one she wore, a girl on the streetcar with a twisted posture similar to that of Aurora on a boat ride they took, a young woman whose cleavage appears to be Aurora's own.[69] The existence of this

[69] It is interesting to note that the first double of Aurora that Jorge encounters is that of her shadow: "Lo primero que veía era la sombra de una modistilla transeúnte, sombra exactamente parecida a aquella de Aurora." The stranger's shadow reminds him of the previous day, when Jorge bent down to pick up Aurora's fan and "tropezó […] en la arena dorada con una Aurora compendiada y exacta, azul y vagamente deformada" (42). Recalling the frequent trope of the "sombra" as a symbol of the lover's ephemerality throughout *Seguro azar* and *Fábula y signo*, as well as the "sombra" that copies and supplants the protagonist of "La otra," the above description is suggestive of Aurora's status as something other than a unique being endowed with aura. Even when the real Aurora is present before him, Jorge encounters a copy of her in the form of her shadow, which perfectly reproduces her ("una Aurora […] exacta") and yet exudes a slight foreignness ("vagamente deformada"). The fact that Jorge perceives a double of

collection of fragments of Aurora comes together to make Jorge feel that a perfect substitute for his object of desire walks alongside him: "Poco a poco la figura aún invisible y distante se formaba por la coincidencia de aquellos abigarrados elementos exteriores que la ciudad le ofrecía sueltos, incoherentes, pero que él, gracias al modelo, a la imagen ejemplar que llevaba grabada en el corazón, iba colocando cada uno en su sitio igual a las piezas de un puzzle. Y ya faltaban muy pocas" (43–44). Although Jorge acknowledges Aurora's uniqueness, this is immediately contradicted by his assertion that the doubles replace her in her absence: "Aunque era única e inconfundible estaba, sin embargo, en todas partes" (43). Similar to the elation of the speaker of "Far West" in the first stanza of the poem, "Aurora de verdad" initially focuses on Jorge's delight at the capacity of a double to reproduce the presence of a desired entity.

However, just as Salinas's poems about technological doubles ultimately underline the gulf between copy and original, this story's emphasis is on the subtle but unsettling dissimilarities that can be identified in the imitation. Jorge eventually begins to perceive the absence of the real Aurora in the doubles that surround him in the street:

> Y sin embargo, a pesar de aquella opulencia de recursos y a pesar, sobre todo, de lo claro que estaba el original deseado en su corazón, Jorge no podía encontrarse realmente con Aurora entera y cabal hasta que la tuviera delante, porque siempre le faltaban unas cuantas cosas esenciales, huecos que no podría llenar mientras que ella con su primer saludo no le diera, en la sencilla formula del 'Buenos días', aquellas tres piezas únicas e inconfundibles: mirada, sonrisa y voz. (44)

The use of the term "el original" here as a point of contrast to the substitutes for Aurora that Jorge has conjured is significant in that it explicitly acknowledges the duality between the real lover and the many reproductions of her. Additionally, Jorge's awareness of the absence of irreproducible elements of Aurora in the doubles bears comparison with Salinas's poems on film

Aurora in the visual similarity of another shadow to her shadow—which is itself a double of her—alludes to his difficulty in ever feeling that she is fully present before him: in finding doubles of Aurora in the street, he is encountering copies of a copy.

and the telephone. As Hartfield-Méndez notes, the versions of Aurora that Jorge sees on the street "are at best insubstantial, and mostly ephemeral" (44). Indeed, Jorge notices that while the doubles offer similarities with Aurora's outward appearance, they lack the aspects of her person that mark her as a unique being with the solidity and permanence conferred by aura: "aquellas tres piezas únicas e inconfundibles: mirada, sonrisa y voz." Of the line "siempre le faltaban unas cuantas cosas esenciales," Carlos Feal remarks, "O sea, le faltaba la esencia de presencia misma" (48). As Feal points out, the absence of these essential elements in the doubles is unsettling because it indicates that the facsimile of Aurora's presence is not equivalent to her presence itself. The above passage resembles the lines in "El teléfono" in which the speaker laments that he has contact only with "aquel / jirón tan desesperado / de ti, tu voz" (*Presagios* 141). Just as the lover's isolated voice amounts to no more than a "shred" of the woman herself, the doubles of Aurora that reproduce only her image—lacking the "mirada, sonrisa y voz" that indicate her unique subjectivity—fail to provide a substitute for her actual presence.

The climax of the story illustrates the lack of correspondence between the original Aurora and the many copies of her that Jorge has created. While waiting for her at the museum, he looks out the window and sees a female figure approaching that he is sure is Aurora because of its resemblance to the doubles: it wears a straw hat, is dressed in blue and displays her "rosado descote" (*Víspera* 46). Yet as he peers eagerly at the distant woman, he hears Aurora say hello to him from behind his back. He turns around in shock: "Al verla, un asombro inmenso le sobrecogía." The real Aurora—the Aurora of the present moment—wears a dark suede hat and a gray suit that hides her chest. Jorge realizes that his doubles were based on moments from the past: "La creación fidelísima, de la mañana y el pensamiento, la figura inventada y esperada se venía abajo de un golpe, porque Jorge la había labrado con lo conocido, con los datos de ayer,

con el pasado." This ending emphasizes the dependence of the reproduction on the past, even though it claims to provide a substitute for the *presence*—the existence in the present moment—of the entity it reproduces. In this way, "Aurora de verdad" recalls "Far West," in which the speaker's illusion that he engages with the West itself is shattered by his realization that the onscreen wind is merely "el retrato / de un viento que se murió" (*Presagios* 73). It also resembles "La otra," which describes the public failing to realize that that they are watching a reproduction of a past moment that conceals the current (deceased) state of the actress. Jorge's belated, uncanny discovery anticipates Francisco Ayala's comments on the cinema in 1929: "El hecho de que ante nosotros […] desfile con su pulso tembloroso un film antiguo de Charlot, nos coloca automáticamente, respecto a él, en situación de posterioridad. Nuestros ojos son, un poco, los ojos de la posterioridad" (*Indagación* 96).

In Jorge's reaction to the "disappearance" of Aurora, "Aurora de verdad" exhibits notable similarities with Salinas's poems in which the speaker is compelled to recreate the lover in her absence. Hartfield-Méndez states of "Vida segunda" that the speaker must "create the *tú* for himself" in "a movement very similar to that found in 'Aurora de verdad'" (77). Similarly, Gertz points out the correspondence between this story and "Amada exacta," noting of the poem, "The speaker's inability to reconstruct perfectly the beloved without traces of her essential reality (voice, hair and eyes) reproduces the problem encountered by Jorge as he attempts to recreate Aurora" (162). It is significant that "Aurora de verdad" resembles both "Vida segunda," in which the speaker is confident of his ability to construct a perfect double of his lover, and "Amada exacta," in which the double remains perpetually incomplete, always lacking her unique essence. This duality reflects the ambiguous status of the double not only in this story but throughout *Víspera del gozo*: Salinas's protagonists consistently alternate between celebrating the double as

a perfect solution to the problem of the lover's absence and recognizing with dread the insufficiency of the double in replicating the presence of the beloved. As we have seen, this ambivalent attitude toward the double is shared by the speakers of "Far West" and "El teléfono."

In "Volverla a ver," Salinas again depicts a man who compensates for the absence of his object of desire by molding his surroundings into stand-ins for her person. We meet the unnamed protagonist as he stands on the balcony of his hotel on a small island off the coast of Europe, looking at the giant letters of the name *MISS PRISCILLA BEEXLEY* in the distance. (Given the ubiquity of Miss Beexley's name on buildings and vessels throughout the environs, it can be inferred that she or family owns the island.) Though the protagonist had a romantic involvement with her three years earlier, he has not seen her since, and she is absent throughout the story. However, as in "Aurora de verdad," the love interest in "Volverla a ver" is present through the doubles that that the protagonist creates of her—in this case, the many iterations of her name. The first-person narrator explicitly states his employment of the letters of her name as substitutes for the woman: "Paseaba sensualmente la vista por los enormes caracteres refiriéndolos con deleitosa complacencia a la persona de carne y hueso a que aludían" (*Víspera* 47).[70] This description of the double as a means of accessing the absent "persona de carne y hueso" whom the protagonist desires is evocative of the role of the reproduction throughout *Víspera del gozo.* In her English translation of "Aurora de verdad," Noël Valis renders the title of the story as "Aurora in the Flesh"—an apt description of the tangible, physically present woman of whom Jorge's doubles are a flimsy facsimile. At the end of "Cita de los tres," a man who spends the entirety of the story fantasizing about the apparition of his absent object of desire is astounded by

[70] "Muertes," a poem from *Fábula y signo*, describes a very similar instance of a lover's name serving as a double for the absent woman. The poem presents elements of the lover progressively disappearing until the speaker is left with nothing but her name, which serves as a facsimile for the living woman's presence: "Se te cayó tu carne, tu cuerpo. / Y me quedó tu nombre, siete letras, de ti. / Y tú viviendo, / desesperadamente agonizante, / en ellas, con alma y cuerpo" (*Presagios* 122–123).

his luck at finally achieving contact with the real woman: "Él se marchaba con Matilde, andando a su lado, de carne y hueso" (36). The repeated references in this collection to the "flesh-and-blood woman" for whom the protagonists yearn are illustrative of the insubstantial doubles and simulated presences with which they must content themselves. As del Pino affirms, the stories of *Víspera del gozo* "se definen por el afán de alcanzar un sentido de plenitud por medio de la posesión de la amada, plenitud que no se disfruta en el presente de la narración" (107).

As the protagonist stares at Miss Beexley's name and fashions it into a substitute for her presence, it takes on the simultaneous reliability and insubstantiality that characterizes the doubles of Salinas's other works in this period. The sun and clouds moving over the letters, creating a play of light and shadow, "la[s] animaban con una vida embriagadora y falsa, y parecía que mi sangre marchaba al compás marcado por aquel inhumano, óptico latido" (48). This description exemplifies the ambiguous status of the double: the letters are "animated" with "life," but the life is "false"; they seem to have a "heartbeat," but one that is "inhuman" and merely "optical." When a boat painted with Miss Beexley's name passes by, the protagonist is initially thrilled to encounter another double: "¡Oh maravilla! las mismas letras tendidas al sol, en el tejado, reposadas e indelebles […], eran las que se ostentaban pintadas todas de blanco, como sus trajes estivales de *yachtwoman*" (49). As in the protagonist's earlier interaction with the name, when he "sensually moved [his] gaze" over each letter as if it were a part of her body, here the corporealization of the name is evident. The letters "sunbathe on the roof," "flaunting themselves" in feminine summer clothes. It is also notable that the letters are described as "indelible," as the quality of permanence that the protagonist attributes to them suggests their function as a comforting bulwark against the absence (and implied ephemerality) of the desired woman. Yet when a flock of seagulls swarms the boat, the letters suddenly seem fragile and

transitory: “No dudé que iba acechando la más propicia ocación para caer sobre aquellos caracteres y llevarse cada cual su letra en el pico, tesoro precioso eternamente disperso” (49). The protagonist’s irrational fear of this highly unlikely scenario recalls the anxiety provoked by the double in the other texts I have analyzed thus far. Like the film image or the telephone voice that is liable to vanish at any moment—taking the presence of the desired entity with it—the double that is celebrated for its ability to circumvent the laws of physics is also feared as frighteningly unpredictable in its comings and goings.

Through the abundance of Miss Beexley’s name throughout the island, the protagonist feels enveloped in the presence of an absent woman. The ascension of a small flag bearing her initials is described in the following way: “Ella escrita en los azules cielos matinales ascendía hasta allí tras la previa depuración de su nombre en dos iniciales, P.B.” (49). The fact that the subject of the verb is not the initials but the woman (“ella […] ascendía”) reflects the role of the name in providing a facsimile of her presence; it is as though he watches Miss Beexley herself being hoisted into the sky. The protagonist boasts of his ability to summon her presence at will: “Para recordarla […] bastaba con […] pasear la mirada por tierra, mar y cielos, seguro de encontrarla doquiera” (50). This statement encapsulates the name’s function as a double whose presence is controlled by the protagonist, allowing him to conjure Miss Beexley as easily as the speaker of “35 bujías” bids the arrival of the feminized electric light. His confidence that he will find her wherever he wishes (“seguro de encontrarla doquiera”) recalls Jorge’s ability to encounter Aurora as soon as he is made anxious by her absence (“En cuanto salía al bulevar empezaba ya a encontrársela” [42]).

However, the ubiquity of the doubles of the love interest soon evolves into a profusion that is frightening rather than comforting. Immediately after exalting his ability to encounter

Miss Beexley's presence wherever his gaze lands, the protagonist sees a truck pass by bearing her name in blue paint. Suddenly, he feels overwhelmed by the quantity of the doubles that surround him: "Ya rendido de tanta presencia cerré los ojos, para no pensar en ella" (50). The simulated "presence" of the absent woman that the copies of her provide has become a sinister force that threatens rather than protects the protagonist. Whereas earlier the abundance of the doubles was a manifestation of his control over an unpleasant reality (the absence of the love interest), the doubles have abruptly ceased to obey him. He is now compelled to "flee" from the simulated presences he has conjured: "Me puse a distraerme, a huir de ella" (50). After spending an artificially long time at a bookstore trying in vain not to think of Miss Beexley, he returns to his hotel room "in desperation" ("desesperado volví al hotel" [51]) and gets into bed. When the telephone rings, he is seized by the certain dread that the call involves Miss Beexley—indeed, she is waiting for him in the lobby—and the end of the story depicts the protagonist's terror and sense of inescapability as he enters the elevator like a prisoner condemned to death. The story provides no explanation for his sudden dread of her; up until this moment, his longing to see her has been unambiguous. The absence of any threatening quality in Miss Beexley herself, combined with the fact that the impetus for the protagonist's fear is the apparition of another double in the form of her name on the truck, indicates that his terror radiates not from the love interest but from the many doubles the protagonist has fashioned of her. The end of the story presents the copies exhibiting qualities that are not those of the original. In showing the doubles taking on a character of their own, the final pages of the text provide a contrast to the earlier suggestion that the doubles deliver a perfect replica of Miss Beexley's presence. As in "Aurora de verdad," this story at first appears to revolve around the desired woman herself—her absence

and the protagonist's feverish anticipation of her reappearance—but is actually centered on the protagonist's interaction with the substitutes for her that he creates.

Why do the copies of the love interest, initially so cherished by the protagonist, suddenly repulse and terrify him? The abrupt transformation of the doubles from comforting to sinister calls to mind Rank's and Freud's comments on the uncanny double. According to Rank, the double originates as a form of protection but comes to symbolizes the very thing it was created to safeguard against: "Originally created as a wish-defense against a dreaded eternal destruction, [the double] reappears in superstition as the messenger of death" (86). Freud reiterates this idea: "The 'double' was originally an insurance against the destruction of the ego. [… But] from having been an assurance of immortality, it becomes the uncanny harbinger of death" (235). In providing a "back-up" of the entity it copies, the double is intended to protect against the annihilation of the self or a desired being. It becomes uncanny when, rather than warding off such a threat, it comes to represent the need for protection against the threat—and ultimately, the impotence and vulnerability of the person who wishes to evade death.[71] Photography has long embodied this contradictory role of the double as both a form of protection against disappearance and a symbol of disappearance itself. Trachtenberg notes that the popular slogan of daguerreotypists—"Take the shadow ere the substance fade"—presented the photograph "as animate extension, double and immortal part of self." However, he also remarks of this slogan, "The very taking of a likeness, fixing a transient appearance of flesh as an image, evoked death,

[71] The reader will note the significant parallels between the double's dual, contradictory function here—as both a protection against a feared reality and, eventually, a confirmation of that reality—and the film image's role in "Polar, estrella." See footnote 30 for a discussion of the relevance of Freud's concept of the fetish to the film image's function in Ayala's story. Just as Freud asserts that the double begins as a comforting form of protection but "becomes the uncanny harbinger" of the very thing it was designed to ward off, his essay "Fetishism" (1927) presents the fetish as a device that initially shields the subject from an intolerable truth but ultimately comes to symbolize that truth. The similarities between the role of the film image in "Polar, estrella" and that of the many doubles in Salinas's avant-garde works—both of which originate as sources of security but come to embody the subject's vulnerability to the thing he fears—illustrate the overlap between Freud's concepts of the fetish and the double.

cessation, ultimate fixity" (68). Salinas's poems on technological doubles, in which the double initially appears as an expansion of a desired being and eventually morphs into a sinister symbol of that being's inaccessibility and fragility, share similarities with Trachtenberg's comments on the Janus-faced nature of the daguerreotype. More broadly, the double's role in "Volverla a ver" and others of Salinas's works from this period embodies the conception of the double as an apparent source of security that ultimately reveals its uncanny, threatening nature.

Like "Aurora de verdad," "Livia Schubert, incompleta" begins with the seemingly existential vanishing of the love interest. In this case, the lover's disappearance is anticipated rather than currently occurring: the protagonist, Melchor, awaits the departure of his girlfriend, Livia, on the 1:35 a.m. train to Prague that night. As in the earlier story, the protagonist's sense that his lover is liable to dissolve into thin air can be detected in the outsized fear that a quotidian absence provokes in him. The first sentence of the story—"Está escrita la hora de mi infelicidad" (55)—illustrates Melchor's hyperbolic dread of Livia's departure. As he watches her take her afternoon nap on her last day in the city, he is certain that he will never see her again: "La miro por última vez" (57). Anticipating her disappearance that night, he mourns that the ties between them will be cut "inevitablemente y sin querer" (57), suggesting that she will vanish suddenly and inexplicably in the manner of the lover in *Seguro azar* and *Fábula y signo*. When Livia leaves the apartment, telling Melchor to meet her at the train station in a few hours, her departure is described as a "disappearance": "Y Livia desaparece, ligera, arrebatada por la ola de un 'Adios'" (63). Melchor's anxiety regarding the perceived ephemerality of his lover is a familiar leitmotiv that connects this story to Salinas's larger body of work during the avant-garde period.

Echoing the actions of the protagonists of "Aurora de verdad" and "Volverla a ver," Mechor's response to the absence of Livia is to create a double of her whose presence, unlike

that of the woman herself, he can control completely. Livia will be replaced by the "soul" that Melchor has crafted for her: "Yo le he fabricado un alma" (60). Though the term "soul" would seem to denote a spiritual rather than physical version of the woman, it is clear that he has in mind a tangible double of Livia's body: "Esta alma, hecha a la medida, con escrupulosa ciudado, que no ha omitido nada, ni la línea escurrida y esbelta de la cadera, ni el color variable de los ojos, ni la longitud un poco excesiva de la pantorrilla, estoy seguro de que se habría ajustado […] a su forma corporal" (61).[72] He conveys his desire for the soul to perfectly reproduce Livia by fantasizing about holding his replica up to her sleeping body to see if they match: "Habría que […] probar si entra bien en el alma del brazo que yo hice ese brazo, largo y rosado, que está caprichosamente tendido en la almohada, y sobre todo alzar los párpados y ver si encajan en esas órbitas, los dos ojos del alma, mía, de Livia" (61). Feal affirms that the story depicts "el alma con la cual él se queda, mientras el cuerpo de Livia lo abandona" (56). Indeed, Melchor's creation of a physical copy of his girlfriend serves the same purpose as that of the doubles Jorge conjures of Aurora and the many iterations of Miss Beexley's name that the protagonist of "Voverla a ver" fashions into substitutes for the woman. This purpose, as del Pino puts it, is to "aminora[r] su frustración ante la dificultad de poseer aquello que existe fuera de sí" (106). Faced with the inaccessibility of their objects of desire, the protagonists of these stories turn to doubles of the women that afford them a sense of possession over their transient and unreachable lovers.

And yet, as in the previous stories, "Livia Schubert, incompleta" ends with the protagonist discovering the inability of the copy to provide a satisfying duplication of the

[72] Similar to the term "shadow," which Salinas employs to represent a woman's double in several of the texts I have presented thus far, Rank notes that the idea of the soul has long existed in folklore as a concept akin to that of the double. Salinas's use of the word "soul" to signify a physical reproduction of Livia's body is aligned with the folkloric notion of the soul that Rank articulates: he states that many early peoples imagined the soul as "a double which is essentially identical with the body. […] The idea of the soul originally coincided completely with that of a second body" (83).

original woman. As Melchor fantasizes about seeing his "soul" match up with the sleeping Livia, he realizes the two Livias will never fully correspond: "Entre su alma original […] y esta réplica exactísima y emocionada que yo traigo, está infranqueable, rendido, inerte, un cuerpo, resistencia suprema" (61). Although the double is an "exact replica" of Livia that "has omitted nothing" in copying her physical form, some element of her organic, living body resists duplication. This recalls the incapacity of the film image, in "Cinematógrafo," to reproduce the "corazón del hombre" (*Presagios* 85) that is specific to the original world. The limitations of the double are reiterated in the story's final pages, when Melchor arrives at the train station to see Livia off. It becomes clear that she has arranged for her friend Susana to arrive on the same train on which she is leaving and take her place as Melchor's girlfriend. Melchor suddenly realizes that the soul he created does not match Livia: "Me doy cuenta de que el alma que hice para Livia, aquel alma profunda y perfecta, a mi imagen y semejanza, alma de mi amor, no le correspondía: es exactamente, sin una arruga, sin un defecto, la predistinada, la única para [Susana]" (*Víspera* 67–68). Of this somewhat bizarre and comical ending, del Pino notes, "La Livia imaginada no se corresponde con la real, aunque ambas están estrechamente conectadas" (121). This apt description of the lack of correspondence between two visually identical entities also applies to the speaker's unpleasant discovery, in the latter half of "Far West," that the virtual West furnished by the cinema is not equivalent to the real land and its inhabitants. Like the film image, which flawlessly mimics the surface appearance of an entity while lacking its essence, Melchor's reproduction of Livia proves to hold only a superficial link to the woman herself.

Feal remarks that Melchor crafts the soul as a means of achieving proximity to an absent, desired person: "Fabricar un alma es […] una manera de apoderarse de otro ser, de anexionárselo, aun en su misma ausencia" (55). However, the reproduction fails to fulfill this

purpose: “Lejos de tender un puente entre dos seres, representa más bien la distancia entre ellos” (56). The motivation of the protagonist of this story, as well as that of “Aurora de verdad” and “Volverla a ver,” in creating doubles of their lovers illustrates Benjamin’s assertion that the reproduction responds to the desire “to possess an object in the closest proximity” (“A Short History” 20). In all three cases, the purpose of the double is to bring near a woman who is located frustratingly out of reach, and whose presence eludes the protagonist’s attempt to control it. Yet the ultimate failure of the double to perform this function recalls the comments of Cadava: “If the desire to ‘bring things closer’ implies a desire for immediacy and presence, […] this wish to abolish distance only leads to more distance” (xxvi). As Cadava notes of the seeming proximity to world events granted to viewers by radio and television broadcasting: “What we are brought closer to is the event’s reproduction. What we are brought closer to, that is, is something other than the event” (xxv).[73] These two statements encapsulate the disappointment occasioned by the double in the three stories from *Víspera del gozo* I have analyzed. Each protagonist employs a reproduction of his love interest as a means of achieving greater proximity to the woman, only to realize belatedly that the only thing he has brought within his reach is the reproduction. After this failed attempt, the lover herself is made to seem even more distant and inaccessible. The misguided fixation on the double as a substitute for the love interest is illustrated in the near total absence of the flesh-and-blood women from the pages of these stories, while the reproductions figure as central characters who are the recipients of the protagonists’ obsessive attention. This role of the reproduction in usurping the real beings that it copies strongly recalls the figuration of the film image in such poems as “Far West,” “Cinematógrafo” and “La otra.”

[73] Collins and Jervis make a similar point about the “virtual reality” furnished by television: “Presence becomes subsumed by signs which purport to represent reality, but actually only signify its disappearing point” (6).

* * *

In describing in evocative detail the strange indeterminacy of presence that characterizes one's contact with a reproduction of reality, Salinas's poems on film and the telephone address directly a concept that is alluded to obliquely but repeatedly throughout his work of the late 1920s. The many iterations of the female object of desire that populate *Seguro azar*, *Fábula y signo* and *Víspera del gozo* are united by the quality of being ambiguously present. The lover in these works is either present but tinged with an insubstantiality that implies absence, or the fact of her absence is concealed by a tantalizingly convincing illusion of her presence. The figure of the double is often the agent of this indeterminate presence: it is through the existence of a reproduction that the absent woman seems to be present, and the sense of her ephemerality that plagues Salinas's speakers and protagonists is derived from the suspicion that the apparently real lover is herself merely a flimsy copy. "Far West," "Cinematógrafo," "La otra" and "El teléfono" constitute rich explorations of the technologies of the cinema and telephone, but, read in conjunction, they also serve to embody the unsettling unreliability of perception that characterizes Salinas's experience of the avant-garde period.

What perhaps most connects these poems to the larger role of the double within Salinas's body of work is the ambivalence that they express toward the concept of the reproduction. "Far West" details both the speaker's euphoria at the visibility of an exotic land and his uncanny fear of the illusion to which he has fallen prey. "El teléfono," similarly, shows the proximity to the lover that the telephone has granted while also conveying the disturbing one-dimensionality and fragility of the version of the woman to which the speaker has access. The speakers of *Seguro azar* and *Fábula y signo* as well as the protagonists of *Víspera del gozo* alternate between the same contradictory attitudes toward the double. The reproduction, these works suggest, holds the

power to supply the presence of a desired and inaccessible being. In this sense, the reproduction is deeply satisfying. Yet these texts also highlight the frustrating and ultimately unsatisfying "engaño" of the copy, which purports to provide presence while actually dispensing only a poor facsimile of presence. As the protagonists of *Víspera del gozo* discover, access to the reproduction does not equate to contact with the real woman; the conclusions of the stories show the protagonists realizing belatedly that, in obsessively pursuing doubles, they have been engaging not with their objects of desire but with something else entirely.

Salinas's work of this period raises philosophical questions that are timeless and universal: What is the connection between perception and reality? How do we know that the information we receive from our senses constitutes proof of what exists before us? Is it possible to distinguish between something real and something that merely has the appearance or sound of reality? The questions posed by these poems and stories point to a predicament that is as old and ubiquitous as human consciousness. Yet in addition to being timeless, the issues central to these texts are timely: they address the greater urgency, in a period of rapid expansion of communication technologies, of the question of the perception-reality link. Technologies such as film and the telephone divorce sensory information from presence. The new era that these technologies usher in is one in which image and voice can travel independently of the human beings to which they pertain; thus, to engage with the sensory experience of a person is not necessarily to interact with the person him- or herself. Salinas's poems and stories of the 1920s provide poignant descriptions of the mode of perception that would come to define the experience of inhabitants of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries: contact not with reality itself but with a copy of reality furnished by technology. The confusion and paranoia of these texts' speakers and protagonists, who are unable to distinguish reliably between originals and

copies and between the “there” and the “not-there,” register the emotional effects of existing in an era in which the eternal enigma of perception is rendered immensely more acute and complex.

Chapter Four

Todo Está en la Superficie: The Physiognomic Film-City of *Cinelandia* (Ramón Gómez de la Serna, 1923)

Ramón Gómez de la Serna's 1923 novel *Cinelandia* portrays an urban world ruled by film. It is a parody of Hollywood, depicting a city where every resident is a film actor and the director of the major production company functions as the city's mayor. The novel is less a commentary on Hollywood specifically, however, than it is an extended description of an imaginary city in which the world of film and the world of the metropolis are not separated by delineating boundaries. The reality contained within the films being produced flows smoothly into the reality of daily life in the city, as inhabitants of the city continue to act out the cinematic roles assigned to them while they stroll through the city streets. As the narrator informs us in the novel's opening pages, Cinelandia is "aquella ciudad del cine, cuyos plebiscitos solo se relacionaban con el cine" (50); it is a city whose guiding laws are those of the cinema. Virtually devoid of plot or character development and composed of a fragmentary series of snapshots of life in the city, *Cinelandia* bears little resemblance to a novel in the traditional sense. Instead, it presents itself as a book-length musing on two twentieth-century phenomena that its author sees as fundamentally interrelated: cinema and the modern metropolis.

In place of any extensive character development, the novel features dozens of brief vignettes describing, as though for a tourist visiting the city, the characters that populate Cinelandia. The most salient feature of these character descriptions is their alarming superficiality. Many characters' presentations are limited to mentions of a facial feature or article

of clothing, while in other cases, any personality traits attributed to a character are presented as the product of his appearance. In several instances, Gómez de la Serna underlines the exclusive attention to surfaces that reigns in Cinelandia by describing characters who can be classified as a certain type only on the basis of their appearance but are nonetheless accepted as genuine: imitation toreros who have never been in a bullfight but strut about the city in the *traje de luces*; men devoid of medical expertise whose qualification as doctors is limited to their glasses, chestnut-colored beards and serious expressions; fake boxers who are treated as heroic athletes because of their twisted noses. The mode of characterization that dominates in *Cinelandia* prioritizes the external over the internal, appearance over reality; indeed, reality is not presented as something separate and independent from what is visible. In Cinelandia, Gómez de la Serna makes clear, what is on the surface is all that matters.

The means by which character is determined in Cinelandia recalls the theory of physiognomy, the pseudoscience of deciphering a person's internal character—personality, profession, intelligence, life experience—based on his external appearance. The logic of physiognomy, which holds that everything about man can be read on the surface of his body, structures the functioning of daily life in the cinematic city. In this way, the novel forms parallels with theoretical traditions that have considered film and the modern city to reflect the tenets of physiognomy. This chapter will examine similarities between the mode of characterization in *Cinelandia* and two bodies of thought—on film in the early twentieth century and on the modern metropolis in mid-nineteenth-century Paris—that embraced physiognomy as the guiding force behind the phenomena they studied. Just as these two bodies of theory overlap significantly in their reasons for believing physiognomy to be relevant to the experience of watching a film or walking through an urban crowd, Gómez de la Serna's novel relies on the logic of physiognomy

in its portrayal of a reality in which film and the metropolis bleed together. *Cinelandia* depicts cinema and the modern city as interrelated phenomena that are united in their adherence to the central tenet of physiognomy: that a human being is exactly what he appears to be.

I. The Presence of Physiognomic Logic in *Cinelandia*

As Rafael Cabañas Alamán observes, when reading *Cinelandia* "captamos un aire de superficialidad pasmosa" (24). Superficiality pervades the text at every turn, making clear that attention to only the visible surface of reality is one of the defining characteristics of life in the cinematic city. As the novel takes the reader on a tour through the city, we are presented with many places and events in which surface-level verisimilitude is at odds with a deeper vacuity. In an office, "librerías atestadas de libros" are revealed to be "librerías simuladas, imitadas solo con los lomos pelados" (133). The public's hunger for tabloid gossip is satisfied by a "boda imitada" between two film stars: a wedding identical in appearance to a real ceremony—"la iglesia cinelándica estaba adornada con las más bellas azucenas y el órgano eléctrico lanzaba al aire todos los pajarillos angélicos" (180)—but dissolved in divorce as soon as the couple exits the church. A replica of Milan's Duomo is built as the backdrop of a film, and the residents of Cinelandia see no difference between original and facsimile: "¿Para qué ir a buscar el Duomo a Milán? Tenían el cinismo de desdeñar el otro por admiración al suyo imitado. No iba a durar más de quince días, pero en todo tenía las proporciones del otro y sus mismos relieves" (171). In all of these examples, an imitation that resembles what it copies only in its visual contours is accepted without reservation as equivalent to the original. The cinelandeses' reason for embracing the imitation Duomo—its "proporciones" and "relieves" are indistinguishable from those of the real cathedral—illustrates the mode of perception of the cinematic city: an

experience of reality that attends only to the visible aspect of things, incapable of perceiving anything beyond the surface.

The replica of the Duomo, constructed as a film prop but integrated into the real skyline of the city, provides an example of the uncanny mélange of solid buildings and hollow facsimiles that constitutes the landscape of Cinelandia. The city is essentially a giant film set, peppered with flimsy cinematic backdrops that provide a convincing illusion of reality only in their visual appearance. The reader's journey through the city and its environs includes visits to manmade film sets whose existence within the world of film—where they are perceived merely as images—contrasts comically with their existence within three-dimensional reality. A film set imitating a snowy mountain scene, with truckloads of salt standing in for snowdrifts, achieves a flawless image of winter: "Los trajes de lana blanca, los largos esquís, los bastones con un volatín en la punta, los guantes de lana escardada, todo completaba la sensación. Hasta los arrebatos de calor parecían arrebatos de frío." The scene is an "estrategma que no podía ser descubierta como el espectador no metiese un dedo húmedo en la sal" (173); it perfectly replicates a frigid mountain as long as one adheres to the principle of "Look, but don't touch" (or taste) that Walter Benjamin identified as the unspoken rule of the modern city.[74] The film set embodies a duality between impeccable verisimilitude—if one's experience of the scene is limited to the visual—and laughable falseness, if the observer is able to perceive the heat of the desert air and the salty taste of the banks of snow. This duality between real and false is so

[74] Paraphrasing Benjamin's *Arcades Project*, Susan Buck-Morss states that "Look, but don't touch" was "the principle of advertisements" to which crowds were conditioned at the mid-nineteenth-century world's fairs. This principle taught the inhabitant of the modern metropolis and the participant in commodity culture—phenomena for which the world's fairs provided a template—"to derive pleasure from the spectacle alone" (*Dialectics* 85). (In the section of *The Arcades Project* on "the world exhibitions," Benjamin describes the exhibitions as "a school in which the masses, forcibly excluded from consumption, are imbued with the exchange value of commodities to the point of identifying with it: 'Do not touch the items on display'" [18].) The concept of "Look, but don't touch," if not the literal phrase, recurs frequently throughout *The Arcades Project* in connection with Benjamin's broader argument that the capitalist metropolis reduces many beings and forms of experience to mere images. The city-dweller who experiences his surroundings only by looking also corresponds to Benjamin's concept of the flâneur.

ubiquitous in the cinematic city that, as Lee Williams notes, by the end of the novel "simulacrum and original have become essentially indistinct constructions" (52). The description of a warehouse full of props in one of the novel's earliest scenes—"Todo en sus veinte pisos tenía apariencia de verdadero y de falso" (53)—serves as a statement about Cinelandia as a whole, a two-dimensional reality in which the concepts of original and imitation, authentic and counterfeit, have converged and become meaningless.

The all-encompassing superficiality of Cinelandia is rooted in the city's existence as a film-like stream of images, in which every aspect of life functions exclusively as an image. The supremacy of the visible, and foreclosure of all non-visible elements of reality, is articulated in a remark made by film star named Venus de la Plata to a newcomer to the city: "Le advierto que le entiendo solo con que me mire… Aquí hemos abolido la palabra" (52). As Venus instructs the visitor, human communication in Cinelandia is achieved not through talking but through looking; to understand another person, one assesses the visual information displayed on the person's face, body, attire and way of moving. This mode of perception strongly resembles that of the physiognomists, whose founding belief is that the visible body is a more effective communicator of man's true essence than his words or actions.

Physiognomy as a philosophy and practice dates back to ancient times and has gone in and out of intellectual fashion over the centuries.[75] *Cinelandia* was written in a context in which the theory of physiognomy was enjoying renewed popularity. In the intellectual circles of 1920s

[75] Tom Gunning provides a summary of the history of physiognomy, noting that "physiognomy has its roots in texts from antiquity attributed to Aristotle and Pythagoras which trace the relation between physical appearance and character" and that the theory was embraced at the beginning of the modern era as a scientific means of understanding a person's inner nature (2–3). The version of physiognomy that influenced nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century literature was largely shaped by the writings of the Swiss pastor Johann Caspar Lavater, whose *Essay on Physiognomy* (1775) defined physiognomy as "the science or knowledge of the correspondence between the external and the internal man, the visible superficies and the invisible contents" (qtd. in Wechsler 24). Gunning notes that Lavater's work brought physiognomy "into the age of reason and sensibility" and "strongly influenced both realist and romantic aesthetics of the nineteenth century" (4).

Spain, the avant-garde arts journal *Revista de Occidente*, headed by the writer and philosopher José Ortega y Gassett, was one site of enthusiastic discussion of this theory and its relevance to modern life. In August 1923, *Revista de Occidente* published an article titled "Genio y figura" by the German psychiatrist and proponent of physiognomy Ernst Kretschmer. A summary of the ideas contained in his recently published work *Physique and Character* (1921), the article is devoted mainly to Kretschmer's theory of the relationship between body type and personality. In the manner of a scientific textbook, the article intersperses descriptions of the various physical types and the temperament to which they correspond—for example, people with stocky stature, short limbs and round faces are affable, chatty and materialistic—with diagram-like illustrations showing frontal and side views of each type. Toward the beginning of the article, Kretschmer articulates the theory that underlies his work, affirming that thanks to the advances of physiognomy, the scientific community has obtained

> nuevas perspectivas sobre la relación entre la estructura corporal y el carácter, y no será, por tanto, posible que en no importa qué cuerpo resida un alma cualquiera, como el contenido de un frasco puede llenar el de otro diferente, sino que hay una 'fórmula endocrina' unitaria, una estructura química única, de la cual es producto la individualidad total del hombre, tanto corporal como psíquica. Todo se halla, pues, predeterminado por el plan total de la personalidad, incluso la más pequeña raíz de un cabello. Gentes de espesa cabellera poseen espíritu distinto que los sujetos de hermosa calva, y tipos de gruesa nariz otro muy diferente que los de nariz fina. (163)

Kretschmer emphasizes the unitary, intertwined nature of physical form and inner character. The analogy he employs to illustrate the approach to human nature that he rejects—the idea that man's interior is to his exterior as a liquid is to the random bottle into which it happens to have been poured—is a vivid exposition of his belief in the deterministic relationship between man's inner being and the surface of his body. Every detail of a person's exterior, down to "the smallest root of a hair," is the product of an inner reality; thus, each human body could be paired with no

other soul than the one that occupies it. This indissoluble unity between exterior and interior makes possible Kretschmer's physiognomic practice: "el diagnóstico del espíritu mediante la estructura corporal" (174).

The laudatory introduction that precedes Kretschmer's *Revista de Occidente* article, in which he is praised as "una personalidad de suma capacidad y genio para la investigación en esta rama de la patología humana" (161), indicates Ortega's appreciation for the "science" of physiognomy. In a lengthy essay titled "Sobre la expresión, fenómeno cósmico" (written in August 1925), Ortega expresses his own physiognomic views, which strongly echo those of Kretschmer. Like the German psychiatrist, Ortega underlines the indissoluble relationship between a human being's exterior and interior. These two components of man "forman una peculiar unidad, viven en esencial asociación y como desposadas, de suerte que, donde la una se presenta, trasparece la otra" (52). Countering the idea that one's perception of a stranger's exterior and understanding of his personality are two separate processes, Ortega affirms that the human form "nos presenta de golpe, y a la vez, un cuerpo y un alma, en indisoluble unidad" (54); this instantaneous, all-encompassing perception reflects "la hermandad radical entre alma y espacio, entre el puro 'dentro' y el puro 'fuera'" (71). He reiterates Kretschmer's assertion that every hair on a man's head is "predeterminado por el plan total de la personalidad" by emphasizing the deterministic role of character in shaping the body: "El alma esculpe el cuerpo. […] La figura es expresión del carácter, y el carácter, escultor de la figura" (85). Any detail one might observe in the physical appearance of a person, from general body shape to a particular mole, serves as evidence of the person's character: "Y nada hay en el mundo físico que no tenga su logaritmo psicológico o viceversa. Como Goethe cantaba: 'Nada hay dentro, nada hay fuera. Lo que hay dentro, eso hay fuera'" (71). Ortega's essay, in its vehement rejection of the idea that

the relationship between man's appearance and inner essence is arbitrary, serves as a clear illustration of the central tenet of physiognomy.

Similar to other physiognomic texts, Ortega's advocacy for the philosophical component of physiognomy—the belief that a person's exterior reflects his interior—leads him to justify the practice of physiognomy, that is, the diagnosis of inner traits through observation of the body. Ortega presents the act of looking at a person's body as an act of *interpretation* of his soul or personality: "Nadie podrá negarlo: la mera inspección de una persona que nos es presentada deja en nosotros […] una como interpretación de su carácter" (80); "El cuerpo humano tiene una función de representar un alma; por eso, mirarlo es más bien interpretarlo" (57). This language reflects a central physiognomic concept: the idea that the various features of a person's body comprise a language that can be read by the physiognomist. Christopher Rivers states that physiognomy approaches the marks of character that appear in man's physical form as an "'alphabet' inscribed on the human body" (86), and he asserts, "'Physiognomical thought' […] always functions as a semiotic system, in which the body is read as a signifier and character, essence […] as its signified" (3). Gustavo Nanclares concurs with the description of physiognomy as a semiotic system, noting that physiognomic theory presents itself as "un lenguaje, un sistema de signos en el que el significante formal, externo y visible del cuerpo, remite a un significado de naturaleza interior, intangible, relativo a la personalidad o al estado psíquico o anímico del sujeto" (273). For the physiognomists, to consider a human body as nothing more than a collection of physical traits, devoid of metaphysical meaning, is tantamount to perceiving a typewritten page as merely a series of black marks on paper.

Simply put, physiognomy is a worldview that defines people by their appearance. While *Cinelandia* makes no reference to physiognomy, the relevance of this worldview to the novel is

evident in the appearance-based form of characterization that Gómez de la Serna exaggeratedly employs. These characterizations, which reflect the characters' perception and classification by the collective gaze of the city, present inner nature as the product of outward appearance. The vignettes describing each character make clear that the city of Cinelandia "reads" inner character on the visible surface of each person's body, determining someone's personality or identity on the basis of his bodily features, clothing and gestures. In many of these character descriptions, the reader is simultaneously presented with the character's identity as determined by the city's physiognomic gaze and the omniscient narrator's knowledge of the character, which encompasses not only exterior details but also invisible inner characteristics. Through the information provided by the narrator, we see how infrequently appearance and essence actually correspond; the *cinelandeses*' superficial, two-dimensional perception of one another results in comically inaccurate characterizations. Part of the novel's humor derives from the contrast in each character description between the assumptions that a physiognomic gaze makes about a character's inner nature and the character's actual personality, intelligence level or past experiences. Through these character presentations, whose purpose is to depict the mode of perception in the cinematic city, *Cinelandia* both mocks physiognomic logic and provides a vivid illustration of that logic.

In *Cinelandia*'s extensive catalogue of characters, by far the foremost element in the presentation of each figure is his or her physical aspect. Several characters receive essentially no description beyond that of their appearance: the "visionario," for example, is a "ser joven con pelo blanco […] cuyos cabellos son un emplasto de vejez sobre su rostro consumido y pulimentado, con puras sienes de marfil" (148–149), but we learn little about him other than the contrast between his young face and prematurely aged hair. In other cases, any noted personality

traits are presented as deriving from characters' outward appearance. The lazy eye of "el bizco" makes him automatically a "tipo cómico" (186); "el actor que tiene buena sombra de frac" is a popular party guest because of his easy conversation skills and constant smile (148); the "gordos del cinema" are "desquiciados y sudorosos, dedicándose a osadías impertinentes que hacían reír a toda la concurrencia" (142). A vignette introducing another archetype of Cinelandia—"los tenebrosos"—illustrates the lack of divide between physical appearance and personality type in the world of the novel. The *tenebrosos* are men whose dark and brooding appearance lends a somber, eerie atmosphere to whichever room they occupy or film in which they act. The description of the prototypical *tenebroso* (Montenegro, the president of the *tenebrosos*' guild) emphasizes the basis of this character type in physical appearance: Montenegro "se aprieta el cinturón antes de proyectarse, pues el secreto de una silueta enconada y temible es que tenga los hombros anchos y la cintura estrecha, ceñida, enconada como la de los ídolos negros" (81–82). All of these character descriptions demonstrate that the inhabitants of Cinelandia are defined by how they are perceived by outside observers. The example of "el bizco," who is assigned his role of a slapstick-style comedian because others find his unaligned eyes funny, is paradigmatic of the deterministic role of physical appearance in the shaping of identities in the cinematic city.

Gómez de la Serna highlights the supremacy of the surface in Cinelandia by repeatedly making explicit the subordination of characters' inner selves to their outward appearance. Throughout the novel, the reader frequently encounters figures whose physical aspect contradicts their true character but who are nonetheless assigned an identity on the basis of their appearance. The section on "hombres malos," whose role both in films and the city is that of the villain, provides an unambiguous example of this phenomenon. The "hombres malos" are "los que más tipo de hombres malos tenían" (61), that is, men whose face and body resemble those of the

typical cinematic villain. Being classed as an "hombre malo" is not dependent on being actually nefarious: "Los hombres malos que no son malos, sino que tienen unas caras de malos atroces, son los que caminan hacia las ciudades del cine" (61); "Los hombres malos, es decir, los hombres que parecen malos, son los que tienen un fondo mejor, son los más apreciables, los más resignados, los mejores" (63). Indeed, the narrator makes clear that the only qualification for this role is physical appearance:

> Eran hombres corpulentos, elegantemente vestidos, antipáticos. […]
> Siempre parecían estar en acecho, y la displicencia y la hostilidad de su rostro llegaban al paroxismo de la repelencia. […]
> Aquel gesto rencoroso que hacían siempre con la boca, aquel reojo constante de su mirar, aquella bizquera extraña, la lividez escabrosa de su rostro, el aspecto animal y osado de su figura, todo eso fabrica al hombre malo. (61–62)

The statement "todo eso fabrica al hombre malo" directly articulates the conclusive role of appearance in determining the type to which each *cinelandés* pertains. The logic of the city holds that is a man's physical aspect—his portly figure, elegant mode of dress, hostile facial expression and suspicious way of moving his body—that dictates what kind of person he is. A passage from Ortega's essay explaining how one identifies a "bad man" bears striking resemblance to Gómez de la Serna's description of the "hombres malos": "Con harta razón el aldeano no se fía de los actos de los hombres, y aunque vea a alguien comportarse filantrópicamente, nos dirá: '¡Es un mal hombre! Fíjese usted cómo mira!' En efecto, no son nuestras acciones lo que declara nuestro más auténtico ser, sino precisamente nuestros gestos y fisionomía" (77). The villager in Ortega's description, who determines the "más auténtico ser" of a person by evaluating not his actions but his facial features and their arrangement in an expression, perfectly embodies the ethos of Cinelandia. Just as the man's philanthropic behavior is incapable of countering the irrefutable evidence of his "gestos y fisionomía," the (invisible) kind-hearted nature of "los hombres que parecen malos" is irrelevant in the physiognomic world of Cinelandia.

In many other instances, Gómez de la Serna illustrates the superficial characterization of Cinelandia through descriptions of "false" characters: people whose external appearance, and thus their identity within the cinematic city, belies essential facts about them. "Los falsos doctores" are, like the "hombres malos," actors whose appearance-based cinematic role also serves as their identity in the real world of the city:

> Cinelandia está llena de falsos doctores. No se debe hacer caso cuando en Cinelandia contestan a la pregunta de '¿Quién es ese?' con la respuesta de 'Un doctor'.
> Generalmente esos doctores de Cinelandia son falsos doctores, tipos con aspecto de eminencias médicas, investigadores de la nada, seres de esos en cuya presencia se adquiere confianza en la vida y seguridad de ser atendidos.
> Los falsos doctores toman actitudes de auscultación con la gravedad del que toma el pulso a un moribundo. […]
> Los falsos doctores, en cuyo rostro lucen los cristales rutilantes sobre las barbas castañas, pasan llenos de solemnidad por las calles. (91–92)

The narrator describes the doctors of Cinelandia as "hombres de barbas medicales" (92). Like the declaration "todo eso fabrica al hombre malo," this description is a pithy statement of the way in which, in Cinelandia, internal character follows from outward appearance. It is the men's *beards* that are medical; the quality of being a doctor resides not in their mind or personality but in their "aspecto de eminencias médicas." Although these actors are devoid of medical expertise, their resemblance to the stereotypical image of a doctor bestows upon them the internal, intangible qualities—intelligence, experience, wisdom—that characterize someone as a medical professional.

Similarly, the "falsos toreros" of Cinelandia hold an identity as bullfighters that derives exclusively from their appearance:

> Cada vez hay más toreros cinematográficos, orgullosos y alegres; orgullosos, porque se pueden vestir con el traje rumboso de oro, y alegres, porque aun vestidos de generales no tendrán que ir nunca a la guerra y su traje no sufrirá el enganchón trágico que suele desgarrar hasta las entretelas el de los toreros de verdad.

> Los falsos toreros de cine se pasean sin inquietud por las mañanas de Cinelandia.
> '¿Y ese?' preguntan los turistas.
> 'Ese', responden los cicerones, 'es un torero'.
> Los falsos toreros, con un tipo español del Canadá, hacen vida de toreros. Se lustran las botas diez veces, toman tres vermuts, pinchan las aceitunas después de cuadrarlas, etc., etc. […]
> Todo su prestigio de toreros reside en su traje de luces y en sus cejas muy negras sobre unos ojos color betún de Judea. (145)

Just as the villains and doctors of the cinematic city are assigned their roles solely because they resemble what the public expects a particular type to look like, the "toreros" are accepted as such on the basis of their attire, facial features and visible habits. While the narrator identifies these characters as "falsos" doctors and bullfighters, he also makes clear that within the reality of the city, they are accepted as genuine. The definitive answers that the *cinelandeses* give to the answer "¿Quién es ese?"—"Un doctor"; "Ese es un torero"—indicate the public's full validation of these imitators as equivalent to a practicing doctor or a bullfighter who risks his life in the ring. In exactly the same way that the people of Cinelandia embrace a replica of the Duomo because "en todo tenía las proporciones del otro y sus mismos relieves," the fact that the appearance of the "falso torero" is indistinguishable from that of a real bullfighter certifies him as genuine in the logic of the cinematic city.

The novel is peppered with examples of "false" professionals who, like the doctors and bullfighters, earn their titles through physical resemblance alone. The "falsos financieros" are "unos hombres jóvenes con traje de tela inglesa que miran de arriba abajo todas las cosas como si fuesen a comprarlas, como si fuesen a firmar un cheque con la equivalencia de todo" (196). Similarly, the boxers of Cinelandia are not athletes but merely "muy parecidos" to those who actually fight: "Los grandes boxeadores que se ven no suelen ser los verdaderos. Son unos muy parecidos que tienen la nariz de los verdaderos, la nariz torcida de un puñetazo y ensanchada por el golpe, que les da un tipo innoble, resuelto, escuerzado" (196). The way in which, in

Cinelandia, a stranger's profession is identified through observation of his physical form—particularly characteristics other than attire, such as facial features, bodily shape and gesture—recalls physiognomic theory, which holds that a physiognomist can pinpoint a subject's profession even if he is not wearing his uniform. As Ortega asserts, "Cada oficio imprime su 'habitus' en el cuerpo del hombre. Hay cuerpos de labriego, de acróbata, de intelectual, de torero" (83–84).[76]

Collectively, these appearance-based characterizations communicate one of the guiding laws of Cinelandia: in the cinematic city, one is what one looks like. This principle is especially discernible in the example of a man who is recruited as an actor "solo por su parecido" to a famous criminal, "el célebre asesino Ravarol" (193). The man is sought out by "el contratista de Cinelandia," who travels the world seeking out actors on the basis of appearance alone: "El especialista en fisionomías buscó por todos los caminos, en todas las plazas públicas y en todos los tabernáculos un hombre que pareciese al asesino de gran celebridad" (194). Once he has played Ravarol in a film, the man's identity in Cinelandia continues to be that of the criminal, and their identities fuse to such an extent that the actor must fear prosecution for Ravarol's crimes: "El supuesto Ravarol desde aquella película vive en Cinelandia como criminal huido de la guillotina" (194). Cinelandia's treatment of "el supuesto Ravarol" as the criminal himself illustrates the principle of "resemblance equals identity" that structures both the functioning of the cinematic city and the practice of physiognomy. The people of Cinelandia, who use the image someone presents to determine everything from his personality to his profession to his past actions, perform the reading of the body that physiognomists like Kretschmer endorse. What

[76] Coincidentally, Ortega happens to name some of the professions that the *cinelandeses* identify by physical appearance: the bullfighter, the intellectual (in the form of the "falsos doctores," whose glasses and solemn way of walking attest to their intelligence) and the athlete (Ortega's example of the acrobat has its counterpart in the boxers of Cinelandia).

Gómez de la Serna makes clear through the superficial characterizations that fill the novel is the absolute authority of the surface in the cinematic city. In Cinelandia, what is real is what is visible, and what cannot be perceived by the eyes does not exist.

II. "Film Is a Surface Art": Physiognomy on the Movie Screen

Cinelandia depicts a world that is filmic in nature. As Edward Baker states of the novel, "Entre vida y cine no hay distancia alguna. […] La existencia de los habitantes de Cinelandia […] se desenvuelve íntegramente dentro de la cinta de celuloide" (158–159). The total containment of "la realidad cinelándica" (134) within the cinema is symbolized when a *cinelandés* describes the movie screen as a "pantalla que envuelve al mundo en su rizo o cucurucho." His conversation partner responds with the statistic that "la cinta de película que se produjo en total el año pasado, podría dar cuatro veces la vuelta al terráqueo" (129). These images of a movie screen and a roll of film snugly enveloping the world form an appropriate allegory for life in Cinelandia, where the laws of cinema are the laws of reality itself. The paramount role of film in structuring the reality of the city makes it impossible not to interpret Gómez de la Serna's portrayal of Cinelandia as his commentary on the medium of film. In constantly and exaggeratedly describing the people of Cinelandia through physiognomic characterization, Gómez de la Serna implies a connection between this mode of characterization and the cinema. In doing so, he responds to a group of commentators on film—writing both shortly before and shortly after the publication of *Cinelandia*—who considered the cinema to be an inherently physiognomic medium, an art form structured by the logic of physiognomy.

As illustrated in Ortega's vocal promotion of physiognomic theory and in the publication of articles like Kretschmer's in such well-known journals as *Revista de Occidente*, the timeworn theory of physiognomy was regaining popularity in the early decades of the twentieth century.

Nanclares argues that the positive reception of physiognomy in those years can be at least partially credited to the advent of film. He points out

> el papel tan interesante del cine en el proceso de recuperación de este campo de conocimiento, especialmente importante en todo el cine anterior a 1929, año de creación del cine hablado. Hasta esta fecha, el séptimo arte no contaba con la palabra como vehículo de expresión y comunicación con el público […], y por tanto la expresión corporal constituía el medio fundamental de los actores y actrices para transmitir los sentimientos, sensaciones y contenidos en general que debían llegar al espectador. (264)

As Nanclares observes, silent film is a medium that imparts meaning only through images. (In *Cinelandia*, this truism is articulated in Venus de la Plata's comment "Le entiendo solo con que me mire… Aquí hemos abolido la palabra" [52].) Physiognomy as a worldview also relies exclusively on images—on the visible aspect of a person's body—in order to perceive reality and ascertain essential truths. Both physiognomy as a mode of perception and film as a medium of communication involve the translation of all facets of reality into the purely visual. In this way, the cinema is uniquely qualified among art forms to "verify" the beliefs of physiognomists. Similarly, many early film theorists excitedly held up physiognomic theory as a branch of "science" whose conventions were those of the cinema. As Nanclares notes, "Buena parte de los primeros críticos y teorizadores sobre cine destacan precisamente la importancia de la fisiognomía" (264).

The text from the Spanish avant-garde that most vividly exhibits the theory of film as a physiognomic medium is Fernando Vela's essay "Desde la ribera oscura: Sobre una estética del cine," published in *Revista de Occidente* in May 1925. The essay's thesis is the interconnected nature of film as an art form and the theory of physiognomy. Vela states this explicitly: "Por todas partes ha empezado a hablarse de 'fisiognomía' y 'conocimiento fisiognómico', […] conocimiento del alma por la intuición de la estructura corporal. […] El cine es el arte que

corresponde a esa ciencia. Sin conocimiento fisiognómico no sería posible el arte del cine; asimismo, la perfección del cine y del conocimiento fisiognómico se implican mutuamente" (212). In demonstration of this idea, Vela describes the human body as seen on a movie screen in the same terms with which the physiognomists articulate their conception of human nature. Film, he asserts, realizes "la más perfecta correlación entre el espíritu y el cuerpo, entre el tipo físico y el carácter psíquico, entre el gesto y el estado pasajero del alma" (212–213). This perfect harmony between body and soul is achieved because the cinema makes visible man's interior state: "El cine nos enseña […] a impregnar de espíritu el cuerpo y ponerlo en la epidermis" (211–212); in film, the body is "hecho transparente" (213) so that the spectator can observe the actor's inner self as easily as he contemplates his physical form. Indeed, the human being as he exists in the cinema lacks a distinction between exterior and interior: "La laminación sufrida por los seres cinematográficos ha acercado tanto su interior a su exterior, que ha hecho de ambos una sola cosa" (219). Film is "el mejor *fisonomista*" because "ante la pantalla no sabemos qué nos pone delante, si un espíritu, si un rostro" (219). Vela's depiction of the human body onscreen as a unitary entity in which surface and interior are indissolubly fused forms obvious parallels with physiognomic theory. His descriptions recall Ortega's assertion that a person's exterior and interior "forman una peculiar unidad, viven en esencial asociación y como desposadas" (52), or Kretschmer's statement that man is composed not of two separate realms of body and soul but of "una 'fórmula endocrina' unitaria, una estructura química única" (163).[77]

Central to Vela's physiognomic approach to film is his conviction that every aspect of a film is present in what is visible to the viewer. As opposed to a work of theater, which involves a

[77] Vela references Kretschmer's and Ortega's ideas in his essay, citing in a footnote Kretschmer's article and a talk Ortega gave on "conocimiento fisiognómico" in Madrid in April 1925 titled "Temas de antropología filosófica." This talk does not appear to have been published, but the ideas contained in it were likely similar to those Ortega would put in writing a few months later in his "Sobre la expresión, fenómeno cósmico."

duality between script and performance, a film contains no hidden dimension beyond the images projected onscreen: "Para el espectador no hay en el cine, además de la representación, tras ella o bajo ella algo como un texto, una partidura, una obra independiente. […] En el cine solamente hay *representación*" (217–218). Yet he clarifies that even the concept of "representation" is inappropriate when describing the cinema: "Todavía este término no significa sin equívoco nuestra idea, porque representar es hacer de símbolo o delegado de otra cosa que no se presenta por sí misma. Más exacta es esta otra fórmula: en el cine, todo es *presentación*" (218). A few pages later, he makes this point more explicitly: "En el cine todo está *presentado*, y todo está en la superficie" (220–221). For Vela, there is nothing "behind the scenes" of a cinematic image, no part of a film's reality that exists outside of what the spectator can perceive. This means that a film can contain no contradiction between what a character appears to be and what he is. Because the body onscreen is "hecho transparente," a person's inner essence is fully integrated into the image he presents to the viewer. In a film, "everything is on the surface," including a person's true nature: "En el cine […] el personaje es lo que *parece*; es exactamente igual a su *apariencia*" (218). Film, in Vela's view, is a physiognomic medium because it embodies the physiognomists' belief that the human being is incapable of making his external image conceal the truth of his inner being. Because a person onscreen is "exactly equivalent to his appearance," someone who looks like a bad man is, by definition, a bad man.

Vela was heavily influenced by the Hungarian film theorist Béla Balázs, whose *Visible Man* (1924) celebrated film as a medium in which man's interior and exterior are united on the visible surface of his body. Balázs believed that the cinema facilitated a return to the corporeal language of gesture, which allows thoughts and feelings to be communicated directly rather than "translated" into verbal language. Like Vela, Balázs embraced the basic principles of

physiognomy. As Laura Heins notes, "In Balázs's estimation, it is the spirit that gives shape to matter and the soul that fashions the body"; thus, "anatomy must be seen as a direct product of character" (65).[78] He affirms that film enables the unification of soul and body: onscreen, "the body becomes unmediated spirit, spirit rendered visible, wordless" (9). Prefiguring Vela's declaration that "en el cine todo está presentado," Balázs's approach to film is founded on his rejection of a duality between visible surface and invisible content. He asserts, "A good film does not have 'content' as such. It is 'kernel and shell in one.'[79] […] Film is a *surface art* and in it whatever is inside is outside" (*Béla Balázs* 19). In *The Spirit of Film* (1931), he reiterates this conception of the cinematic image: "The image itself is the reality that we experience and there is nothing behind it, no concrete objective reality beyond the image" (161). Balázs and Vela share the belief that the reality of the cinema screen is a wholly visual reality, in which nothing exists that cannot be perceived by the viewer.

Since, for Balázs, there is "no concrete objective reality beyond the image," a character's appearance and his essence are the same thing. An epigraph to a chapter of *The Spirit of Film*—"The possibility and the meaning of the art of film lie in the fact that each object appears as it is" (100)—articulates Balázs's belief that a person's appearance onscreen serves as proof of his inner nature. In an "absolute film," there is "no difference between appearance and reality" and thus "resemblance becomes identity" (174); like that of Vela, Balázs's film theory supports the identification of someone as a villain, an intelligent doctor or a famous criminal based on the person's physical resemblance to one of these types. Balázs argues that the melding of exterior

[78] Heins also points out that Balázs shares with the Nazi physiognomist Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss the "conviction that the soul creates the body. Clauss wrote that 'the soul does not just need a body as such, a body of any form whatever, but instead a body that is suitable for expressing its particular style of experiencing. […] The style of the body must correspond to that of the soul'" (74). It is interesting to observe the near-exact correspondence between Clauss's articulation of the body-soul relationship and Kretschmer's assertion that "no será […] posible que en no importa qué cuerpo resida un alma cualquiera" (163).

[79] Balázs is quoting from a poem by Goethe. Recall that Ortega employs a very similar Goethe quote—"Nada hay dentro, nada hay fuera. Lo que hay dentro, eso hay fuera" (71)—in his argument in favor of physiognomy.

and interior that occurs in film enables the spectator to determine the onscreen person's true nature through the clues provided in his appearance. "In film," he asserts, "there is no such thing as the *'purely*' external or 'empty' decoration. In film, everything internal becomes visible in something external; it follows that *everything external testifies to an internal reality*" (29). As spectators, "we instinctively judge [the character] by his appearance" (29) because we know that no detail of his physical aspect is arbitrary or merely superficial. Like the physiognomists, Balázs conceives of the human body (as it appears onscreen) as a semiotic system, each bodily feature and article of clothing serving as a signifier of personality or identity. He explicitly acknowledges the conclusive role of appearance in shaping the viewer's understanding of a character: "In film what determines character from the very first moment is his or her *appearance*" (27).

Balázs and Vela's physiognomic theory of film—the belief that a film contains nothing outside of what is visible to the viewer, and that the appearance and true identity of an onscreen person form an inseparable unity—is fundamentally at odds with the concept of acting. Both writers denounce the idea of the professional actor, whose skill consists of playing characters with a distinct personality from his own, and whose face and body will serve as the physical form of a multitude of different characters. Because their approach to film is founded on the idea that a cinematic character's inner self and outward appearance are one and the same, they can only tolerate actors who play a single role: that of their own identity. Balázs's declaration that "the director's task is not to find a 'performer,' but the character itself" (27)—the sarcastic quotation marks around "performer" indicate his contempt for the presence of any kind of artifice in the cinema—would be echoed in Vela's essay: "Preferimos en el cine las figuras auténticas, no escogidas entre los actores para ser figuras, sino escogidas entre las figuras para

ser actores […]. Actor que no sea él mismo el personaje que representa, es denunciado por el cine como estafador" (218–219). The typical process of casting someone in a role, which allows actors of varying physical forms to audition for the part of a particular character, violates the physiognomic principle of character-appearance correspondence. The process for which Balázs and Vela advocate is to select a person (not necessarily a professional actor) purely on the basis of his appearance, and to let the cinematic character follow from the real personality of the actor. (Because they subscribe to the physiognomic tenet that a man's physical aspect reflects his inner self, they believe that an actor with the intended appearance of a character will also be endowed with the character's personality.)[80] As Vela asserts, "En el cine, las películas donde un actor realiza *su único y verdadero papel* son las mejores, por ejemplo, las de Charlot" (219). Since Charlie Chaplin's onscreen and real-life personas are considered to correspond exactly, he is the ideal actor to support a theory of film as a physiognomic medium.

The arguments of Balázs and Vela are prefigured by nearly a decade in the essays of Alfonso Reyes and Martín Luis Guzmán, who jointly wrote a film criticism column for the Madrid-based journals *España* and *El Imparcial* under the pseudonym Fósforo from 1915 to 1916. One of the points that Reyes and Guzmán reiterate most often and most emphatically is that film actors should not play multiple characters. Indeed, in their view, film actors should not play any character that would require them to dissimulate their true personalities (that is, any role that necessitates acting). Anticipating Balázs's affirmation that "in film what determines

[80] In *The Spirit of Film*, Balázs expounds on his aversion to acting: "A self-evident consequence of the developments I am describing here has been the tendency to avoid the actor. Actors, it has been supposed, neither should 'act', nor do they need to. There is no need for them to 'represent' something for the camera to reproduce at one remove. Instead, the camera should discover something and show directly what is naturally there. This is why film-makers have sought out original types" (106). The editor of Balázs's book follows this declaration with a footnote citing from his 1948 *Theory of the Film*, which provides an example of his ideal means of selecting an actor: "If they wanted a woman looking in terror into the barrel of a gun directed at her and the acting of an actress was not natural enough for their requirements, they went out and searched for a truer one in the street. A woman screamed in terror because the pram with her baby in it overturned by accident. She was photographed without her knowledge and then this really unselfconscious, naturally terrified face was cut into the picture to face the gun."

character from the very first moment is his or her *appearance*," Reyes and Guzmán argue that a cinematic character is inseparable from the physical form of the actor who plays him. Each actor's individual face and body have a deterministic effect on the character he interprets: "La alucinación objetiva del cine […] logra producir relaciones sutilísimas de sensibilidad entre una fisionomía y un carácter" (191). Like Vela, they praise Chaplin as the exemplary cinematic actor: "Charlot es siempre Charlot, […] y aparece siempre semejante a sí mismo" (157).[81] Chaplin the onscreen character always "looks like" Chaplin the real man, because the two figures are not separated by the chasm of artifice. This unity between character and actor means that the physical form of the onscreen character can serve a physiognomic role: as an index of the character's inner being.

For Reyes and Guzmán, the defining characteristic of film is the oneness of character and actor—or more precisely, of a character and the physical aspect of the actor who plays him. Unlike in the theater, where it is acceptable for a character to be performed by various actors and for an actor to have a repertoire of different characters that he plays, in film it is jarring and even offensive to see an actor play multiple roles: "La idea de que hay en escena un hombre que finge un carácter distinto del suyo propio es provocada más facilmente por el teatro que por el cine" (156); in the cinema, "pocas cosas hay más desagradables que ver […] a un mismo actor adaptarse a representaciones diversas" (149). They repeatedly complain about the unpleasant experience of seeing the same face serve as the countenance of different characters. Of the actor Edward Coxen, they write, "Hemos visto a Coxen de cowboy, de abogado, de militar, de caballero, y de perdido; ya nos parece que siempre miente" (149). Similarly, they are affronted to

[81] This statement recalls Guillermo de Torre's ode to Chaplin in his poetry collection *Hélices* (1923), which contains the line "Charlot único igual a sí mismo" (106, spacing original). De Torre's description of Chaplin underlines the same unitary fusion of character and actor that Reyes and Guzmán and Vela celebrate.

witness actors from a film they have previously seen (*The Million Dollar Mystery*, 1914) in new roles:

> Lo triste es ver—como recientemente nos ha sucedido en algún salón de Madrid—la máscara de Norton (aquel delicioso 'reporter-detective' del 'Mistero del millón de dólares') servir de disfraz a un patriota con aspecto de pordiosero; y la máscara de Olga (aquella enigmática Olga de la Sociedad de los antifaces; cuerpo rectilíneo de donde surgía una inexplicable magia de mujer) mal ajustada a una aldeana tan honesta como anodina. (157)

"Máscara" is Reyes and Guzmán's term for the fusion between the character and the actor's face; it communicates their belief that, as Nanclares puts it, "el personaje ficcional y la cara del actor que lo encarna" form "un binomio casi indisoluble" (270). So strong is their belief in this unity that they see the faces of the actors James Cruze and Marguerite Snow, who play Norton the reporter and Olga the haughty countess in *The Million Dollar Mystery*, as the faces of the *characters* rather than of Cruze and Snow. In the mold of the physiognomists, they perceive a natural connection between these faces and Norton's and Olga's personalities; like Kretschmer, they reject the idea that "en no importa qué cuerpo resida un alma cualquiera" (163).

Reyes and Guzmán's solution to the irksome experience of witnessing the same body paired with diverse characters is to limit each actor to a single role:

> Cuentan que un empleado especial de la Casa Lasky Ca (Holliwood, California) no hace más que recorrer el país en automóvil, buscando los sitios adecuados para las escenas cinematográficas: sitio aprovechado una vez, es sitio que no volverá a servir […]. Este esfuerzo por descubrir el rasgo único debiera aplicarse a la selección de actores: si hemos visto a Norton como Norton, no queremos verlo de otra manera. No nos invada, aquí también, aquel tono de la crítica de teatros […] que consiste en observar lo bien que estuvo Fulano 'interpretando' a Cimbelina, la candidez con que Fulana 'dijo las palabras' de Ofelia, o la realidad con que el otro se 'disfrazó' de Marchbanks. (157–158)

It is important to note the frequency with which Reyes and Guzmán use words associated with deception to describe instances in which the actor-character identity is disrupted. They denounce the idea of an actor *pretending* to be something he is not; Coxen is *lying* when he plays multiple

roles; Norton's and Olga's faces are *disguises* that *poorly fit* the characters of the new film; and an actor who *plays, says the words of* or *dresses up as* a character that is not his own is implied to be a fraud. Manuel González Casanova comments that when Reyes and Guzmán accuse Coxen of lying, they are "igualando al cine con la verdad" (78). Indeed, they share Vela's belief that a cinematic character "es lo que parece" (218) and that the character's appearance is a "transparente" (213) lens through which his true nature can be seen. When this "law" of cinema—the idea that there is zero dissonance between what the spectator sees and reality—is violated, they feel that the medium of film has been bastardized. Reyes and Guzmán's inability to accept a duality between a person's exterior and his interior, between what is visible and what is real, reflects the logic of physiognomy.

The city of Cinelandia conforms to the demand for an indissoluble unity between actor and character through the fact that almost every *cinelandés* plays a single role, both in the cinema and in the ceaseless "film" of the city. "Los tenebrosos," for example, are admitted to Cinelandia in order to lend the same gloomy atmosphere to films as to the real taverns and terraces in which they live their lives. Reyes and Guzmán's fantasy of a Hollywood employee who drives around the country seeking out actors solely on the basis of their appearance is realized in the "contratista de Cinelandia" (193), an "especialista an fisionomías" (194) who travels the world in search of a Ravarol lookalike. Just as Reyes and Guzmán dictate that an actor found in this way should never be used for another role—"Si hemos visto a Norton como Norton, no queremos verlo de otra manera" (157)—the Ravarol impersonator is bound for life to his identity as the famous criminal. The cinematic city complies with Vela's imperative that an actor play only "su único y verdadero papel" (219) by ensuring that the identity of each actor aligns with that of the character he has been hired to play.

Gómez de la Serna demonstrates even more hyperbolically this synthesis of actor and character by describing a *cinelandés* whose total lack of personal identity makes him wholly adaptable to any role. Teodoro Palmer's ability to seamlessly conform in both body and soul to whichever character he is assigned guarantees that there will be no gap between the inner self of the character and that of the actor:

> Teodoro Palmer era el ser que es diferente todos los días, como la verdadera criatura cinelándica y el verdadero cameleón humano. […]
> Y todo variaba en la psicología de Palmer también, dándole ese distinto parecido y acentuando la lejanía de su personalidad.
> A los interviuadores ya les había dicho: 'Yo necesito saber qué papel voy a representar un mes o dos antes del día de la ejecución de la primera escena, porque me dedico a vivir el nuevo tipo con todas sus consecuencias […]. El alma es variable como el rostro y puede ser de distinta manera, optimista, austera, ambiciosa, espantable'. […]
> La facultad de este personaje de cine le convierte en el actor ideal. (133–134)[82]

Teodoro Palmer constitutes the ideal cinematic actor because his interior—soul, personality, identity—is subordinate to his exterior. Indeed, since his interior is essentially nonexistent, he is composed only of surface; he literally embodies Vela's assertion that the onscreen person "es exactamente igual a su apariencia" (218). Immediately after describing Palmer, the narrator muses on the topic of costume determining personality: "¿Qué condición, qué tipo, qué arte se necesitan para triunfar en Cinelandia? A lo mejor basta con un bigote. […] Un bigote […] que

[82] In the prose poem "The Crowds" (1861), Charles Baudelaire uses the figure of the actor as a symbol of the modern artist, a flâneur/dandy who strolls the city streets consuming the fleeting images of others and offering his own in exchange. This artist has "a taste for disguise and masks" (44) and changes his personality frequently in accordance with the appearance he adopts at a given moment: "The poet benefits from an incomparable privilege which allows him to be, at will, himself and others. Like those wandering souls in search of a body, he enters, when he so desires, into the character of each individual. For him alone, everything is vacant; and if certain places appear to be closed to him, that is because in his eyes they are not worth the bother of visiting" (44). This actor-like figure is, for Baudelaire, someone for whom another man's "character" is as "vacant," or available to assume, as his overcoat or shoes. The concept of personality as a mask that the actor can—and should—don along with the appearance to which this personality corresponds is echoed in *Cinelandia*'s description of Palmer. Like Palmer, Baudelaire's modern artist ensures that his inner and outward selves will align seamlessly. Indeed, in the essay "The Painter of Modern Life" (1863), another text centering on the element of performance inherent to urban crowds, Baudelaire espouses physiognomic theory in nearly the exact terms that would be employed by Kretschmer and Ortega sixty years later: "The perpetual correlation between what is called the soul and what is called the body is a quite satisfactory explanation of how what is material […] reflects and always will reflect the spiritual force it derives from" (404–405).

[…] tiene una vida latente particular y le acompaña todo un sistema de expresión, de acciones, de reojos, de pensamientos luminosos en la frente cinematografiada" (135). This description of a moustache from which follows a "whole system" of thoughts, actions, gestures and facial expressions—in other words, a moustache that comes with its own identity[83]—aptly articulates the subordination of inner self to outer appearance that is a requisite of life in Cinelandia.

The narrator's description of the identity-conferring moustache recalls the "barbas medicales" (92) from which the authority of Cinelandia's "falsos doctores" derive. Similar to Palmer's fusion of actor and character, the "doctors" of the cinematic city exemplify the comical subordination of an actor's identity to that of the role he plays onscreen. When a woman at a party needs urgent medical attention, the partygoers make way for Cinelandia's preeminent fake physician, "el doctor Erbert": "Erbert, como impulsado por un deber cinematográfico, acudió al cuarto de la desgracia. En todos los que lo ocupaban se produjo, al ver al falso doctor, la extraña actitud de echarse hacia atrás y dejar que pasase" (201). The attitude of the partygoers reflects the practice of determining an actor's interior self based on the identity of the character he interprets. Like Reyes and Guzmán, who seem to attribute the personalities of Norton and Olga to Cruze and Snow (in that they see the actors' roles in *The Million Dollar Mystery* as authentic and all of their other roles as fraudulent), the people at the party interpret Erbert's cinematic identity as evidence of his inner character. Indeed, the partygoers' deference toward Erbert—

[83] In a 1928 humorous article about the actor Adolphe Menjou—known for his iconic and prominent moustache—Luis Buñuel makes almost the exact same statement as *Cinelandia*'s narrator: "¿Quién ignora […] que […] su gran fuerza menjounesca irradia de su bigote, ese genial bigote de los films? Es tópico afirmar que los ojos son el mejor vehículo para llegar hasta el fondo de una personalidad. Pueden serlo igualmente unos bigotes como los suyos. Tantas veces inclinado sobre nuestras cabezas, en el gran plano ¿qué pueden habernos dicho sus ojos que sus bigotes no nos hayan dicho ya? […] Sin la parte positiva y definidora de su personalidad Menjou quedaría convertido en cualquiera, en todo menos Menjou" ("Variaciones sobre el bigote de Menjou" 168–169). In a satirical piece published later the same year, Buñuel refers again to Menjou and his facial hair: "De su americana extrae una magnífica pitillera de oro […]. La abre y nos la presenta repleta de bigotes. Tomamos uno, que le agradecemos muy cordialmente" ("Noticias de Hollywood" 175). This description again echoes the *Cinelandia* passage cited above in that it suggests that Menjou's ability as an actor resides in the moustache he dons daily like an article of clothing; he must keep a well-stocked supply of moustaches so as not to lose his qualification for his profession.

their assumption that since he wears glasses, a serious expression and a lab coat, he must be able to provide assistance in a medical emergency—manifests the broad physiognomic tenet that what is visible is what is true. In showing the ridiculousness of the partygoers' treatment of Erbert, Gómez de la Serna's novel pokes fun at the attitude toward the film image shared by Vela, Balázs and Reyes and Guzmán: the idea that the appearance of a person on a movie screen constitutes irrefutable proof both of his inner characteristics and of the identity of the actor who plays him.

The section on Teodoro Palmer is representative of the parodic stance toward physiognomic film theory that is present throughout *Cinelandia*'s character descriptions. On a surface level, the character of Palmer is compliant with the doctrine of physiognomy. His willingness to adapt his inner self to whatever role is required of him makes him the perfect embodiment of interior-exterior correspondence, in the sense of a match between actor and character as well as that between personality and physical appearance. By asserting that "el alma es variable como el rostro," Palmer guarantees to his audience that there will never be any dissonance between what they see onscreen and his "soul," or interior world of personality and identity. Yet when considered more closely, what Palmer's approach to acting realizes is the *opposite* of physiognomy. The arbitrary relationship between his inner self and the image he presents is that of "el contenido de un frasco [que] puede llenar el de otro diferente" (163), the analogy Kretschmer uses to illustrate the antithesis of physiognomy's conception of the human being. The section describing Palmer demonstrates that a perfect correspondence between interior and exterior is possible only when a person is devoid of an inner self; in the character of Palmer, the vacuity of physiognomy's approach to human nature is laid bare.

This section epitomizes the overall posture of *Cinelandia* toward the physiognomic theory—particularly as it relates to film—that is on display in its pages. In its continual use of physiognomic logic to characterize the actors who populate Cinelandia, the novel at first glance appears to concur with and promote the ideas of theorists like Vela, Balázs and Reyes and Guzmán. However, the novel's satirical attitude toward these characterizations, which makes manifest the obvious flaws in these theorists' logic, mocks the idea that whatever is visible onscreen must serve as evidence of reality. It is less likely that *Cinelandia* constitutes a specific rejoinder to Reyes and Guzmán's columns (or to other physiognomic film theory published prior to 1923) than that Gómez de la Serna was aware that the average film spectator instinctually believes that the appearance of a person on a movie screen testifies to his essential nature. In portraying humorously the *cinelandeses*' perception of one another—which is the mode of perception of a moviegoer enjoying a never-ending film—Gómez de la Serna parodies the widespread, largely unconscious assumption that the cinema is incapable of accommodating any discrepancy between appearance and reality.

III. Physiognomic Typecasting in the Modern Metropolis

The portrait of "aquella ciudad del cine" (50) that Gómez de la Serna paints throughout *Cinelandia* functions as an extended description of two interrelated phenomena: cinema and the modern city. Although it is accurate to classify the novel as a parody of Hollywood, critics have also pointed out its relevance to Gómez de la Serna's perspective on the modern metropolis in general. Deborah Parsons interprets the cinematic city as an allegory of Gómez de la Serna's hometown: "Through Gómez de la Serna's Madrilenian lens […] the landscape of Cinelandia distinctly resembles not so much Hollywood as the Spanish capital" (90). In David Henn's view, the "mundo cinematográfico" of *Cinelandia* represents its author's vision of "posiblemente toda

ciudad del porvenir" (286–287). As much as the novel is a commentary on the nascent technology of film, it is also a commentary on the modern, capitalist metropolis, which was a burgeoning phenomenon in early 1920s Spain. Like the cinema, the Spanish metropolis in these years was a spectacle in itself, offering the pedestrian a phantasmagoric procession of images in the form of advertisements, neon lights, shop window displays and fast-moving crowds.

What unites Gómez de la Serna's depiction of both phenomena is the reduction of all elements of reality to the purely visible. Venus de la Plata's articulation of the primacy of the image in Cinelandia ("Le entiendo solo con que me mire… Aquí hemos abolido la palabra" [52]) is equally applicable to film and the modern city. Her comment recalls both Georg Simmel's famous description of the metropolis—"Interpersonal relationships in big cities are distinguished by a marked preponderance of the activity of the eye over the activity of the ear" (qtd. in Wechsler 20)—and Jean Epstein's description of film: "There has never been an emotive process so homogenously, so exclusively optical as the cinema. Truly, the cinema creates *a particular system of consciousness limited to a single sense*" ("Magnification" 240).[84] When the narrator refers to Cinelandia's film studio as "la gran fábrica de imágenes […] en pleno delirio" (71), he describes not only the studio but also the cinematic city itself. Like the films in which the *cinelandeses* act, the city of Cinelandia is a "great image factory," a ceaseless flood of autonomous images divorced from any meaning beyond their visible surface. The novel's exaggerated, satirical portrayal of the supremacy of appearances in both the cinema and the metropolis—two quintessential elements of twentieth-century modernity—provide a commentary on modern life as a whole. The participant in industrialized, capitalist modernity, *Cinelandia* suggests, inhabits a world in which real entities and mere images enjoy equal status.

[84] Reyes and Guzmán make a similar point to Epstein (and Venus de la Plata) when they declare the fundamental incompatibility of film with intertitles: "El letrero es el enemigo del cine" (159).

As we have seen, *Cinelandia* reflects (and anticipates) the theory of film as a medium that embodies the logic of physiognomy: the idea that the physical form of a person onscreen is "legible" and contains easily decipherable information about his or her personality, identity, profession, intelligence level and past experiences. Gómez de la Serna's novel also contains significant parallels with a body of thought that viewed the modern city in the same way that Reyes and Guzmán, Balázs and Vela view the cinema: as an arena structured by the laws of physiognomy. As Tom Gunning notes, "Physiognomy became a popular social science in nineteenth century Paris, where it provided a visual means to order the diverse and anonymous masses that surrounded the urban dweller" ("In Your Face" 5). In the chaotic urban context of mid-nineteenth-century Paris, the "science" of quickly and definitively classifying the ceaseless swarm of strangers was advantageous to the city dweller in that it furnished him with a much-needed sense of order and control. Richard Sennett points out that if one approaches the crowd through the lens of physiognomy, "the stranger becomes a figure whose nature can be understood by analysing his or her appearance" (7–8). Physiognomy helped transform the experience of the urban crowd from one of unintelligible disorder to one structured by clear-cut classification. Rivers identifies this as the primary motivation underlying physiognomy: "As an effort to deny the arbitrary, physiognomy is above all an attempt to order, to explain, to narrate" (101). Just as the theorists who apply physiognomy to film consider the onscreen human body to be legible, physiognomy allowed the nineteenth-century Parisian to see the image of his fellow city dweller as a readable text filled with useful information about the stranger's identity and inner character.

Physiognomy became a practical tool for the Parisian to use in his everyday life through the new genre of the "physiologies," catalogues of the various urban types that combined

caricature-like illustrations with written descriptions of each type's identifying features. The physiologies, as Gunning notes, "appeared as a sort of literary fad in the 1840s"—they were the French counterpart to the Spanish *cuadros de costumbres*[85]—and reflected "the physiognomic studies of Lavater and his disciples" (5).[86] The physiologies taught the city dweller how to classify a stranger through the details of his appearance, from facial structure and bodily type to attire and way of walking. The central literary figure associated with this genre was Honoré de Balzac, whose description of characters—both in the physiologies and in his novels—shared with physiognomic theory the tenet of "physico-characterological correspondence" (Rivers 117). In *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin quotes a passage from Balzac's 1847 novel *Le Cousin Pons* that illustrates the latter's subscription to the principles of physiognomy: "Cannot an idiot be immediately recognized by characteristics which are the opposite of those shown by a man of genius? … Most observant people, students of social nature in Paris, are able to tell the profession of a passerby as they see him approach" (437). Balzac's assertion that the urban stranger's intelligence level and profession can be "immediately recognized" as soon as one contemplates his image exemplifies the physiognomic perspective that underlies the physiologies. As Rivers asserts, the foundation of the physiologies is "a theory which equates

[85] The *cuadros de costumbres*, the physiologies' parallel in the Spanish context, were short prose pieces that claimed to present realistic portraits of the different types of people in society. Like the physiologies, the *cuadros de costumbres*—a subgenre of the broader literary movement of *costumbrismo*—reflect a nineteenth-century appetite for realism and a desire to catalogue and characterize the many social and ethnic types that comprise a society. Both the physiologies and the *cuadros de costumbres* emphasize appearance when describing each type, presenting their subjects from the perspective of an external observer such as a tourist or ethnographer. Where the *cuadros de costumbres* and the physiologies diverge is in the centrality of the city to each. The former genre focuses on rural types as much as urban ones, often using a nostalgic perspective to depict traditional or folkloric customs that survive, unaltered by modernity, in the countryside. By contrast, the latter is a specifically urban phenomenon that uses physiognomy as a tool for understanding the chaotic new environment of the metropolis. It is because the physiologies combine physiognomy with the modern city that I have chosen to use this genre as a point of comparison with *Cinelandia*. Given the emphasis on the metropolis in Gómez de la Serna's novel, nineteenth-century precedents for this work are less easily found in Spain—which was just starting to develop industrialized, capitalistic cities at the time of *Cinelandia*'s publication—than in France, which experienced the phenomenon of the metropolis at a time when physiognomy was a widespread force in literature.

[86] Johann Caspar Lavater is considered the father of modern physiognomy; see footnote 74 for more information.

appearance with reality, surface with depth" (113)—the conviction that a person's interior self is present and observable on the surface of his body.

In a general sense, the appearance-based mode of characterization that dominates in *Cinelandia* recalls the physiognomic characterization that gained traction in nineteenth-century Parisian literature. Judith Wechsler points out that writers such as Balzac and Charles Baudelaire "typically introduced their urban characters by description *from without,* as they would be seen by a stranger […] rather than by direct statement of character or origins" (13). The reader of *Cinelandia* can observe that Gómez de la Serna employs this same method of presenting characters. The novel's characters are essentially never described from within, that is, through accounts of their subjective perception of themselves and their environment. Instead, the characters are described as a stranger on the street would perceive them, with a heavy emphasis on their appearance.

The more specific way in which *Cinelandia* employs the conventions of the physiologies is through the novel's exclusive reliance on types in its mode of characterization. The physiologies achieved the legibility of the urban stranger by providing an index of static types to which a given person could pertain. As Wechsler states, "The term *physiologie* suggested objective observation of a *type* rather than of an individual. […] The physiologies were classifications by stereotypes: the doctor, the lawyer, the investor, the soldier, the traveller, the student, the poet, the musician, the blue-stocking, the married man, the robber, the tailor, the kept woman, the worker, the bourgeois and the spectator" (34). *Cinelandia* is similarly composed of a catalogue of stereotypes that eschews individualization, a feature several critics have pointed out. Henn's description of the novel as "una serie de escenas en las cuales se ven varios tipos del mundo del cine" (383) and José Camón Aznar's observation that the text reads as a parade of

"personajes y más personajes: el bizco, el negro, el psicoanalista, el judío, la princesa rusa, etc." (324) identify the predominance of caricaturized types —and absence of individuals—in the cinematic city. Parsons notes the brittle, synthetic quality of Cinelandia's population of types: "The inhabitants of Cinelandia, like the city itself, are two-dimensional. […] All are superficial figures, […] mannequins groomed to conform to cinematic types" (91). The physiologies and *Cinelandia* are similar in format, as both consist of brief, superficial descriptions of character types that define people by their resemblance to the image associated with each category. Gómez de la Serna's novel reads like a guide to the city in the mold of the physiologies, teaching the newcomer to the metropolis how to quickly classify each person he encounters as a doctor, a villain, a bullfighter or another static type.

The physiologies made use of synecdoche and metonymy in teaching their readers how to identify a stranger as a particular type. Keri Yousif affirms that *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes: encyclopêdie morale du XIXe siècle* (1840–1842),

> subscribed to physiognomy: the pseudo-scientific correlation between a subject's exterior and his/her internal character. The logic follows that once one learned the visual codes: white apron, felt cap, and large stomach, for example, signal a grocer, one could accurately identify any man or woman on the streets of Paris, quickly placing him or her within the appropriate social category. In *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*, writers and artists facilitated the task by adopting the aesthetics of caricature, exaggerating and then reducing figures to their most stereotypical and, at times, metonymical, if not synecdochic, qualities: the rag picker weighed down by a large backpack full of wares, the café waiter eternally covered in a white apron, the school mistress frowning sternly, a book in her hands. Collectively, the portraits form a visual and verbal map of the nineteenth century in which each social class and profession is immediately recognizable in terms of its salient feature. (63)

The physiologies established the identifying feature of each stereotype, teaching the Parisian that a stranger can be reliably classified as a certain type if his image contains the right body part, object or item of clothing. *Cinelandia* employs the same mode of characterization. The cinematic

city's financiers are identified by their facial expression of looking things up and down "como si fuesen a comprarlas" (196), the boxers by their "nariz torcida" (196) and the doctors by their "cristales rutilantes sobre las barbas castañas" (92). The narrator's description of the toreros states that they are classified as such because they present the specific features associated with the bullfighter stereotype: "Todo su prestigio de toreros reside en su traje de luces y en sus cejas muy negras sobre unos ojos color betún de Judea" (145). The physiologies and Gómez de la Serna's novel both register the logic of physiognomy by subordinating the individual to the details of his image, presenting identity as residing in the object someone holds or the article of clothing he wears.

One of the most noteworthy aspects of *Cinelandia* is the lack of divide between the films in which the characters act and the real world of the city; as previously noted, the *cinelandeses* continue to act out their assigned cinematic roles while they traverse the city in their non-working hours. Teodoro Palmer's cinematic characters are as integrated into the reality of the city as any real person: after his films have finished shooting, the characters "convivieron mezclados durante algún tiempo a la realidad cinelándica" (134). Max York, another movie star, "estaba pulimentado por el cine. Se había vestido para muchas películas el chaqué peliculal" (55). The image of York "polished" by the cinema, donning the "jacket of film" so often that it has become like a second skin, is evocative of the osmosis between Cinelandia's actors and the roles they are assigned. The *cinelandeses* willingly embody their cinematic characters at all times, accepting a view of the city as a never-ending film in which they have been hired to act. Their consciousness of the type to which they are expected to correspond and their readiness to conform to said type recalls the physiologies, whose purpose was to teach people not only how to recognize the types of the city but also how to correctly perform the stereotype they had been

assigned: Yousif notes that the physiologies taught "their readers how to recognize the various social types as well as the appropriate behavior for each category" (16–17). The vision of the modern city that *Cinelandia* presents is one in which the urban population is divided neatly into types and each city dweller enthusiastically performs the type to which he supposedly corresponds. C.B. Morris observes that the novel's characters "sacrifice individuality to the role demanded of them by the films in which they play" (156). Similarly, Williams notes that the *cinelandeses* "perform by rote, conforming to established poses, gesticulations and dialogue. […] The characters full-knowingly follow and acknowledge their Hollywood scripts" (51). The novel depicts characters embracing the appearance-based, superficial roles they have been assigned. One of the "hombres malos" exclaims, "¡Soy tan antipático!", and the narrator notes that he is well-liked because "reconocía con gran sinceridad su antipatía" (63). "El bizco," who is classified as a "tipo cómico" because of his facial features, "se aprovechaba de su bizquera y exageraba las payasadas vulgares" (186). Residence in Cinelandia is contingent upon one's willingness to actively participate in the city's physiognomic, type-based way of determining character.

The description of Cinelandia's hiring process, which is indistinct from its process of admitting immigrants to the city, makes clear that hopeful *cinelandeses* are expected to perform their cinematic roles outside of the confines of the films in which they act. A sign announcing an opportunity for villains—"SE NECESITAN HOMBRES MALOS"—advertises a job that will be executed not only in films but in the city: "Es el cartel con que se anunciará Cinelandia para atraer a los hombres malos que dan tanto relieve a la belleza de las mujeres, con las que se casan en las falsas iglesias que permiten ese matrimonio cinematográfico, que se disuelve al salir de la iglesia" (63). The "hombres malos" are compensated with a monthly salary ("mil dólares al mes"

[62]) for ceaselessly performing the role of the villain in the life of the city, including participating in the perennial spectacle of Cinelandia's fake weddings.[87] The "contratista de Cinelandia, el que escogía los tipos por el mundo" (193), who locates the Ravarol lookalike, also seeks out men to fulfill the role of "los hombres de los puentes," people who lean pensively on bridge railings and radiate peaceful contemplation. The contractor's proposition to a man of this type that he encounters in his travels—"¿Quiere usted venir a Cinelandia con un sueldo fuerte para seguir asomándose a los puentes o sentándose en los bancos que hay en la curva de los caminos por los que pasan los raudos automóviles?" (193)—makes clear that the role being offered takes place in the daily reality of Cinelandia. The city's expectation that its residents fully embody their assigned roles at all times is illustrated in the mandate for an indissoluble synthesis between actor and character: the role of pensive bridge-leaner "no se puede imitar con otros que no sean los hombres de los puentes" (193). Cinelandia's preeminent "gordo," whose role in the city and in films is that of the comical fat man, must maintain his physical aspect in order to continue to conform to his appearance-based type: "Su régimen era el de engordar, pues suponiendo que de pronto se hubiese quedado flaco hubiera perdido todos sus contratos" (144). Like the "gordo," all the *cinelandeses* are required to comply with the expectations of the stereotype that they have been admitted to the city in order to perform. This rigid typecasting recalls the Paris of the physiologies, which, as Sennett notes, encouraged the city dweller "to present a fixed character, a stable personality, an ideogram" (8).

The paradox of Cinelandia's mode of assigning character types is that each *cinelandés* is expected to manifest the seamless interior-exterior unity of physiognomic theory while simultaneously presenting an image that conforms with the urban crowd's expectations of a

[87] Gómez de la Serna's collection *Novísimas greguerías* (1929) contains a *greguería* poking fun at the tendency of Hollywood actresses to marry and divorce continually: "Las actrices de cinematógrafo se casan tantas veces, porque las obliga a eso el salir de casa tan peripuestas como quienes se van a casar en traje de calle" (42).

particular stereotype. In other words, the *cinelandés* must embody his role authentically, without acting, but he must also comply with the predetermined norms of his type. This paradox is made more visible in the description of characters whose assigned role in the cinematic city is that of their race. To be admitted to Cinelandia as a Japanese person, one must manifest the image associated with the racial stereotype: "En Cinelandia lo que más se aprecia es un buen japonés. En aquella legión extranjera del arte no se piden sus pasaportes a los que llegan. Se les acepta si hacen bien el paso del tigre y logran interpretar bien la pantomima del ensayo" (64). The Japanese man's audition for the role of "un japonés" consists of the director testing his capacity for highly emotive facial expressions, which appears to be the synecdochic feature that serves to identify this type: "Si el japonés es fino se dedica a su dolor y lo simboliza con gestos en que el director entrevé si maneja el entorne de la expresión que tan dramático resulta en el cine" (65). Similarly, the role of "un negro" is granted only to black men who produce the demonic grin that the director expects of this race: "De las selvas comarcanas llegaban a Cinelandia los […] que creían poder asustar a los blancos haciendo muecas lo bastante horribles con sus dentaduras blancas de diablos de la noche" (110). The director's predetermined image of "un buen japonés" or an authentic "negro" means that merely being Japanese or black is not sufficient qualification for these roles. In Cinelandia, the qualities of Japanese-ness and blackness are not interior, intangible identities but external manifestations that can be perceived—and judged as satisfactory or not—by an outside observer.

Cinelandia's director uses physiognomic logic to determine racial authenticity: in order to ascertain whether a person possesses a particular interior quality, he evaluates the image the person presents. This physiognomic approach to race in the cinema is articulated in Balázs's

comments on the same topic. In *Visible Man*, Balázs advocates for race-based roles to be played by actors of that race, rather than white actors in costume and makeup:

> The director's task will be made easier if he chooses an actor who has no need to act the character of his race, since he already possesses this […]. He will have no need to exaggerate and to acquire a series of stereotypical gestures that are slightly off-key, like a slightly ill-fitting wig. The gestures called for all come naturally, and so his acting has all the weight of habitual experience. (27)

Balázs's vision of an actor playing his own race involves the same actor-character unity that he extols in Charlie Chaplin: he believes that the actor will have no need to act, since the part he is playing is exactly equivalent to that of his own identity. In a later article, Balázs reiterates this idea when he praises an Indian film actress whom he sees as having no acting skill but serving as a perfectly authentic representation of her race: "Genuine is only that which is as it is and could not be otherwise" (qtd. in Heins 67). The paradox of Balázs's expectations for racial actors is evident in his assertion above that "the gestures called for all come naturally." On the one hand, Balázs considers the racial actor's performance to "come naturally," flowing unselfconsciously from his actual personality and unaltered by artifice of any kind. On the other hand, the actor must present "the gestures called for"—that is, the image Balázs associates with a particular racial stereotype—in order to be certified by him as authentic. Ultimately, these contradictory demands apply to all residents of the cinematic city. Cinelandia stipulates that its inhabitants both conform to the static type they have been assigned and embody that type wholly, eliminating any dissonance between their exterior images and interior selves. Teodoro Palmer, whose ability to mold his personality around the character he plays "le convierte en el actor ideal" (134), is also the ideal inhabitant of the version of the modern city that Gómez de la Serna presents in *Cinelandia.*

As we have seen, the central tenet of physiognomy is the equivalence between appearance and identity: since man's inner self is present on the visible surface of his body, he is what he appears to be. *Cinelandia* presents this physiognomic tenet as structuring both the cinema and the modern metropolis. The novel's title, which combines film and the city in a sort of portmanteau, is representative of the fundamental overlap between the experiences of city dwelling and participation in the film industry that the text evokes. Gómez de la Serna suggests that what unites the new phenomena (in 1920s Spain) of cinema and the metropolis is the human being's existence in both settings as a two-dimensional image, nonexistent outside of how he is perceived by the masses of consuming eyes. The pseudoscience of physiognomy had been performing this reduction of man to his visible aspect for centuries before the invention of the technology of film or the advent of the modern capitalist metropolis. *Cinelandia* illustrates how these two twentieth-century phenomena, which are founded on the absolute supremacy of the visual, are fertile territory for the worldview of the physiognomist to gain widespread acceptance.

* * *

At the beginning of his essay, Ortega inadvertently explains how physiognomy serves to treat human subjects as though they were objects. He states that what differentiates the human being from non-thinking objects is that the former is comprised of a duality between interior world and external surface:

> El hombre no es sólo un cuerpo, sino, tras un cuerpo, un alma, espíritu, conciencia, psique, yo, persona, como se prefiere llamar a toda esa porción del humano que no es espacial, que es idea, sentimiento, volición, memoria, imagen, sensación, instinto. Dicho de otra manera: ¿el cuerpo humano es, por su aspecto, cuerpo en el mismo sentido en que lo es un mineral? […] La diferente actitud nuestra ante la carne [humana] y ante el mineral estriba en que […] el mineral es todo exterioridad. […] La vida [humana] es constitutiva e irremediablemente una realidad oculta, inespacial, un arcano, un secreto. Por eso sólo la carne [humana],

> y no el mineral, tiene un verdadero 'dentro'. […] El hombre exterior está habitado por un hombre interior. Tras del cuerpo está emboscada el alma. (49–51)

Ortega uses this distinction as a set-up for his argument in favor of physiognomy,[88] but this passage nevertheless illustrates the objectification of subjects that physiognomy accomplishes. As Ortega points out, the human being is not only a visible body but also "un alma, espíritu, conciencia"; as opposed to the mineral, which is "todo exterioridad," man contains a subjective inner world ("un verdadero 'dentro'") that is not visible to the external observer. This inner world is "una realidad oculta, inespacial, un arcano, un secreto" because it cannot be perceived from the outside. Only an object can be fully known through observation of its material aspect; a subject, by definition, is endowed with an intangible realm that escapes sensory perception. Physiognomy, which considers every element of man to be present and observable on the surface of his body, approaches the human subject as though it were the mineral in Ortega's description.

When physiognomy is used as a lens through which to view human beings as they appear on the movie screen or in an urban crowd, the result is the same: the objectification of subjective beings. Rivers argues that the physiologies' depiction of man presents him as equivalent to an animal: "The *Physiologie* […] attempts to describe a sociological type, in much the same way that a zoologist might describe a certain species of animal, using overt physical characteristics […] to serve as the defining principles of classification. […] The basic theory which supports the *Physiologies* is shared by both physiognomy and zoology: that a creature can be analyzed and/or classified according to external qualities" (112–113). Rivers's observation that the physiologies

[88] Ortega argues that while the body of a lifeless mineral is a simple object, its aesthetic details conveying nothing beyond themselves, the human figure is saturated with information about the soul that inhabits it. Because the human being is inhabited by an inner world, which has its expression in the person's physical form, human flesh can be "read" in a way that the body of a mineral cannot. If the various features of a human body constitute an alphabet charged with meaning for the physiognomist, the details of the mineral's form are merely random marks devoid of connection to any signified. For Ortega, to observe human flesh is to simultaneously perceive exterior and interior: "Al ver carne, prevemos algo más que lo que vemos; la carne se nos presenta, desde luego, como exteriorización de algo esencialmente interno"(50).

approach the human being as though he were classifiable "according to external qualities" identifies the physiognomic doctrine underlying these texts, which (contrary to Ortega's claims) makes no distinction between man, mineral and animal. Steve Woodward states that one of Balázs's central imperatives for filmmakers is that they must "meld the objective with the subjective" (32). While Woodward is referring to Balázs's belief that the camera reveals "the face of things" and grants subjectivity to inanimate objects, his statement is also indicative of the other way in which Balázs's theory of film dissolves the subject-object distinction: by lowering human beings to the level of objects. Balázs's physiognomic approach to film—his conviction that onscreen, "each object" (or person) "appears as it is" (100)—negates the presence of an invisible interior world in man, and thus negates the distinction between the human and the non-human. Reyes and Guzmán, whose attitude toward film is equally emblematic of physiognomy, declare that man as he appears on the movie screen is composed only of his visible surface: while the theater is characterized by "la calidez de la misma presencia humana," in the cinema "los personajes se nos muestran como meras entidades visuales" (155). In *Cinelandia*, the presence of physiognomic doctrine in the reality of the cinematic city is evident in the *cinelandeses*' existence as "mere visual entities," as devoid of subjectivity as the collection of lines and shadows that make up a black-and-white image projected on a screen.

Chapter Five

Leveling the World: Metaphor and *Deshumanización* in the Cinematic Dissolve and the *Greguerías*

The definition of modern art that José Ortega y Gasset puts forth in his 1924 essay "La deshumanización del arte" remains one of the most accurate articulations of the aesthetic tendencies of the Spanish historic avant-garde. The concept of "dehumanization," which centers on eliminating the inner world of the human subject as the focal point of art, identifies the common motivation underlying many of the diverse art forms that together constitute the avant-garde. As Anthony Geist notes, "Cuando Ortega acuñó el término no descubrió el fenómeno, le dio nombre. […] Ortega había tocado la sensibilidad artística de su tiempo" (152). Dehumanized art, as defined by Ortega in his essay, is art that departs thoroughly from the tradition of depicting reality through a subjectivist lens. The dehumanized artist places no emphasis on the emotions, thoughts and inner reality of the subject, preferring instead to contemplate man from the outside, as an aesthetic object like any other. This artist employs stylization and abstraction in order to make man unrecognizable as himself, and consequently no longer distinct from and superior to the material world. The thrill of dehumanization derives from the artist's ability to "level" the world, making the human being no different in category from the objects and natural landscape that surround him.

Ortega and similarly minded avant-garde artists identified metaphor as the hallmark of the truly modern artist and the primary tool for achieving dehumanized art. By merging together highly disparate entities, especially those that constitute antipodes of the subject-object

hierarchy, metaphor brings opposites into a relationship of equivalence. The radical metaphors celebrated by Ortega and his fellows used no nexus to connect their images other than visual similarity: through metaphor, a human subject and an inanimate object would be melded together simply because they shared the same shape, texture, color or form of movement. Metaphor, in the view of these writers, served the cause of dehumanization because it attended only to the external, aesthetic surface of a thing, not to the category of being to which the thing pertained. Orteguian dehumanized metaphor replaced a worldview defined by hierarchies and categories with one in which people and objects existed on the same plane, made equivalent by virtue of their visual correspondences.

Two artistic techniques that—not coincidentally—enjoyed popularity during the same years in which dehumanization dominated Spain's artistic world were Ramón Gómez de la Serna's *greguerías* and the chains of dissolving images in films like Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí's *Un chien andalou* (1929). This chapter will examine the *greguerías* and the cinematic dissolve (as employed by Buñuel and Dalí) as innovative new versions of dehumanized metaphor. Both the dissolve and the *greguerías* employ the basic formula of metaphor in that they superimpose one image over another, and both techniques serve the goals of dehumanization by provocatively equalizing subjects and objects on the basis of their aesthetic similarity. Buñuel, Dalí and Gómez de la Serna all display an attraction toward the leveling of the world that dehumanized art effectuates; their work corroborates Ortega's dictum that the defining characteristic of "the new art" was its tendency toward dehumanization. These artists adapted the goal and basic structure of dehumanized metaphor to new genres, maintaining the objective of placing disparate entities on the same plane while finding new ways to more vividly convey this equalization of opposites.

I. "El Más Radical Instrumento de Deshumanización": Metaphor As Hallmark of the Avant-Garde

In "La deshumanización del arte," Ortega illustrates his concept of dehumanization through an allegory in which a dying man is surrounded by four people—the man's wife, his doctor, a newspaper reporter and a modern painter—whose different modes of viewing the man represent various degrees of dehumanization. The perspective of the dying man's wife is one of near-total identification with the man's pain: "El suceso lamentable atormenta de tal modo su corazón, ocupa tanta porción de su alma que se funde con su persona" (361). The woman's empathy for her husband causes her to experience vividly his internal state, making it impossible for her to perceive the aesthetic details of the scene. Though the doctor feels no emotion for the man, his professional investment in his patient's fate means that "la escena se apodera de él, le arrastra a su dramático interior" (361). The doctor's involvement in the scene's "interior"—the pain and fear of the man's inner state—prevents him from achieving a fully dehumanized view of the events before him. The reporter, by contrast, has very little contact with the inner, subjective dimension of what is taking place, which frees him to experience the scene as a "mere spectacle" for his eyes to enjoy: "Para él propiamente es el hecho pura escena, mero espectáculo […]. No participa sentimentalmente en lo que allí acaece, se halla espiritualmente extento y fuera del suceso" (362). However, since the reporter's task is to compose a story in which human characters are the protagonists, his perspective necessarily places special emphasis on the people who populate the scene, distinguishing them from the natural and manmade objects that also fill the room.

The modern painter, whose perspective is that of the fully dehumanized artist, differs from the other observers in that he makes no distinction between the dying man and the

inanimate entities that surround him. The painter "contemplates" the scene as a play of light and color, maintaining his focus wholly on the aesthetic details presented to him: "Su actitud es puramente contemplativa […]. El doloroso sentido interno del hecho queda fuera de su percepción. Sólo atiende a lo exterior, a las luces y sombras, a los valores cromáticos" (362). Through the example of the modern painter, and the contrast he presents with the empathetic figure of the dying man's wife, Ortega makes clear that the essence of dehumanized art lies in the artist's refusal to imagine the inner world of a human being. The modern artist "attends only to the exterior" of a given entity, perceiving nothing beyond the visual information that is objectively present before him. This means that he experiences the dying man in the same way he experiences the bed on which the man lies: both exist for him as merely an aggregate of "lights, shadows and chromatic values."

The central factor that distinguishes the perspectives of the four people in Ortega's analogy is the amount of figurative distance that exists between each observer and the interior state of the dying man. Ortega establishes an opposition between proximity to this inner world and one's ability to "see" or "contemplate" reality. The empathy and identification that tie the wife to her husband's inner state—"En la mujer del moribundo esta distancia es mínima, tanto, que casi no existe"—are an impediment to her capacity to be a true observer of the scene: "Para que podamos ver algo, para que un hecho se convierta en objeto que contemplamos, es menester separarlo de nosotros y que deje de formar parte viva de nuestro ser" (361). Only the painter, who eschews imagining how the man thinks or feels, is fully capable of perceiving the scene's aesthetic value: "Los grados de alejamiento […] significan grados de liberación en que objetivamos el suceso real, convirtiéndolo en puro tema de contemplación" (362). Ortega summarizes this concept with the declaration "Ver es una acción a distancia" (370). In order to

experience a human being as a "pure object of contemplation," the observer must cease to identify with the person as a fellow subject with an inner world like the observer's own; he must limit his perception to the visual details of the person's body. The analogy of the dying man presents dehumanization—the artist's act of placing the human subject on the same plane as inanimate objects—as a purely visual experience of reality, in which the value of a given entity consists solely of the shapes, colors and textures it presents to the eye of the observer.

Modern art, in Ortega's view, is "dehumanized" not only in that the human being ceases to be the protagonist of an artwork, but in that man is actively and intentionally brought onto the same plane as objects:

> El arte de que hablamos no es sólo inhumano por no contener cosas humanas, sino que consiste activamente en esa operación de deshumanizar. En su fuga de lo humano no le importa tanto el término *ad quem*, la fauna heteróclita a que llega, como el término *a quo*, el aspecto humano que destruye. […] Se trata de pintar […] una casa que conserve de tal lo estrictamente necesario para que asistamos a su metamorfosis, un cono que ha salido milagrosamente de lo que era antes una montaña, como la serpiente sale de su camisa. El placer estético para el artista nuevo emana de ese triunfo sobre lo humano. (366)

The pleasure of dehumanized art lies in the "triumph over the human" that Ortega describes in the above passage: the artist's conversion of a human being into something object-like, in such a way that the viewer is aware of the draining of personhood from the subject.[89] Dehumanization

[89] Ortega's concept of dehumanization is not limited to transformations of human beings into objects, but also encompasses the abstraction, stylization and denaturalization of objects that fall within the category of "lo humano": the world as it is viewed and experienced from a human-centric position. In the above quote describing dehumanization, Ortega includes the example of a house being abstracted into a stark, foreign shape. Although this example does not involve a human figure changing into something inanimate—it presents the transformation of an object into another object—it accomplishes the goals of dehumanization because it strips the subjective qualities associated with "home" from the image of the house. As the house is pared down to a minimal assemblage of straight lines, it ceases to present as a refuge of safety and comfort and becomes as unfamiliar and value-neutral as any other abstract shape. This transformation satisfies Ortega's desire for dehumanization because it provocatively dispenses with the subjectivist lens that imbues certain objects with the meaning and emotions they hold for human beings. While this chapter focuses specifically on the transformation of subjects into objects, it is important to note that for Ortega, dehumanization's "flight from the human" can also include the aestheticizing and distancing of objects that carry special meaning for humankind.

centers on the *transformation* of the human into the inhuman, and the modern artwork should showcase this process of transformation.

Ortega's essay emphatically celebrates metaphor as the artistic technique that most embodies this conception of modern art. His definition of metaphor as "esta actividad mental que consiste en suplantar una cosa por otra, no tanto por afán de llegar a ésta como por el empeño de rehuir aquélla" (373) describes the technique in the same terms with which he characterizes dehumanized art. Just as avant-garde art consists of a "flight from the human" and places emphasis on "the human aspect it destroys," the nucleus of metaphor is not the final image at which it arrives but the initial image that it dissolves through its process of transformation. By using the same formulation to describe avant-garde metaphor and dehumanized art, Ortega suggests that the primary function of metaphor in "the new art" is to exhibit a human being's metamorphosis into an object. Indeed, he explicitly presents metaphor as the essential tool of dehumanization: "Es la metáfora el más radical instrumento de deshumanización" (374).

Ortega's conception of metaphor serves the stated purposes of dehumanization because it causes one entity to transform into another, thus transcending the category of human, animal, manmade object or element of nature to which a given entity normally pertains. The function of metaphor is to make a thing disappear by transforming it into something else: "La metáfora escamotea un objeto enmascarándolo con otro" (373). As the second image in the metaphor is superimposed ("enmasacarada") over the first, the original image evaporates, converted into an entirely different category of being. Ortega gives as an example of "la metáfora elemental" that of making an apple into "una mejilla de moza" (363). Through this metaphor, an inanimate natural entity is transformed into the body part of a human subject. If the metaphor were reversed, starting with the cheek of a young girl and converting it into an apple, it would

constitute an example of the "fuga de lo humano" that Ortega exalts as the essence of dehumanized art. Ortega presents metaphor as a magical or supernatural phenomenon that bestows godlike powers on the writer who employs it. All other human activities "nos mantienen inscritos dentro de lo real, de lo que ya es. Lo más que podemos hacer es sumar o restar unas cosas de otras" (373). By contrast, the power of metaphor, which consists of actively transforming one being into another, "llega a tocar los confines de la taumaturgia" (372). As noted above, what is exciting to Ortega about dehumanized art is that as a human being is transformed into something no longer recognizable as human, the transition between the two terms is portrayed "para que asistamos a su metamorfosis." Metaphor performs this same function by drawing the reader's attention to the process of transformation itself.

Ortega declares that the primacy of metaphor in modern poetry is what distinguishes the new poetry from its old-fashioned predecessors: "La poesía es hoy el álgebra superior de las metáforas" (372). Metaphor, in "la nueva inspiración poética," is "sustancia y no ornamento" (374). Rather than serving as a means to an end—communicating certain qualities of the entities depicted in its images—in the new poetry metaphor is an end in itself. Its role in avant-garde works is to depict one thing morphing into a fundamentally different thing, thus illustrating the inconsequentiality of traditional categories of being. In a 1925 essay, the Ultraist poet Guillermo de Torre echoes Ortega's assertion of the centrality of metaphor to avant-garde poetry: "Si la metáfora ha tenido siempre una gran importancia, según puede deducirse, en la literatura lírica, sólo en nuestros días es cuando adquiere un desarrollo extraordinario y rebasa todos los límites previstos" ("La imagen" 307).[90] The new poetry aimed to take the technique of metaphor to its

[90] De Torre also concurred with Ortega's concept of dehumanization and considered "La deshumanización del arte" to accurately convey the artistic motivations underlying his own Ultraism and similar poetic movements such as Creationism: within the pages of Ortega's essay, "hemos encontrado la reproducción o, mejor, la vertebración orgánica y aun la corroboración de varias ideas y numerosos puntos de vista que llenan el plano teórico de las

extremes by maximally exploiting its capacity to transform and rearrange the elements of the earth.

For thinkers such as Ortega and de Torre, the truly avant-garde metaphor is characterized by the novelty of the images it pairs together, presenting the reader with a new vision of reality in which things are united by unprecedented affinities. De Torre affirms that the "genuinely modern" metaphor is that which transcends traditional notions of similarity and difference: "La metáfora que merezca plenamente tal nombre, la metáfora genuinamente moderna no debe limitarse tímidamente a asir aspectos conocidos y relaciones previstas de las cosas" (300); "Las metáforas de suprema audacia son aquellas que barajan arbitraria y divinamente los elementos cósmicos y geográficos, dándonos una nueva y sorprendente visión de la tierra" (318). By "arbitrarily shuffling" the elements of the universe to create previously inexistent pairings, modern poetry presents a familiar reality through a novel lens. Geist points out that a common goal of avant-garde poets such as de Torre is to establish "dentro del poema nuevas relaciones entre los objetos del mundo" (60). The new relationships that such poetry creates are ones of equivalence, in which seemingly antithetical entities are brought onto the same plane. For de Torre, "la gran revolución que en el campo de la metáfora han consumado los líricos modernos de las distintas tendencias europeas" has been to "poner en el mismo nivel todos los elementos" (319). Because avant-garde metaphor defies traditional hierarchies and radically reorders the elements of the earth, writers who employ this form of metaphor "se sienten dotados de poderes excepcionales, de facultades taumatúrgicas" (319). As Geist notes, the function of metaphor in avant-garde poetry is to "rebaja[r] el valor de ciertos elementos del cosmos" and raise that of others, with the result that "todo acaba en un mismo nivel" (60).

vanguardias […]. La teoría de la 'deshumanización' del arte enlaza fraternalmente con las teorías creacionistas" ("Problemas y perspectivas" 278).

Carlos Bousoño defines metaphor as the superimposition of two planes: "La estructura de la metáfora resulta de entreverar o suponer dos planos, A y B. En la metáfora, por ejemplo, 'cabello = oro' ('cabello como oro') el plano B, 'oro', se superpone sobre el plano A, 'cabello'" (191). The avant-garde proponents of metaphor similarly describe metaphor as the product of layering one image over another in order to create a double image in which two entities are fused. In a 1914 essay on metaphor, Ortega recalls the Greek origin of the word, pointing out that "la palabra 'metáfora' —transferencia, transposición— indica etimológicamente la posición de una cosa en el lugar de otra" ("Ensayo de estética" 261). Similarly, in 1921 Jorge Luis Borges defined metaphor as "una vinculación tramada entre dos cosas distintas, a una de las cuales se la trasiega en la otra" ("Apuntaciones críticas" 395). Both of these definitions center on metaphor's act of bringing together, or superimposing, two entities, so that the first term in the metaphor is seen "through the lens of" the second. This conception of metaphor is also present in what Rafael Cansinos Assens, in a 1919 essay, describes as the "double images" of the Creationist poet Vicente Huidobro. Cansinos Assens asserts that the new poetry satisfies "un anhelo de creación verdadera" by pairing together two disparate entities whose juxtaposition exists only in the mind of the poet and not in reality: "De esta suerte, se obtiene una doble imagen que se presenta fundida en una sola" ("La nueva lírica" 76).

Cansinos Assens's descriptions of Huidobro's double images illustrate the form of metaphor revered by Ortega, de Torre and other avant-garde poets. In these metaphors, two entities that are normally separated by hierarchy and category are melded together to create a single image that suggests the fundamental equivalence of the two entities. Of Huidobro's poems from *Horizon Carré* (1917) and *Ecuatorial* (1918), Cansinos Assens writes: "Un don de taumaturgia se manifiesta en cada una de estas creaciones. Se ha prescindido de todo nexo lógico

[…]. Los pájaros beben el agua de los espejos, las estrellas sangran, en el fondo del alba una araña de patas del alambre teje su tela de nubes. Una lluvia de alas cubre la tierra en otoño" (74). The statement that these metaphors "have dispensed with any logical nexus" is not strictly true, as it is clear that what unites the two entities in each metaphor is their visual similarity. Cansinos Assens's point is that these images are radical because they bring disparate things, such as manmade objects and elements of nature, onto the same level. Each metaphor employs superimposition to layer the image of one entity over another, emphasizing their aesthetic similarity: a mirror over a still puddle from which a bird drinks, a wound seeping blood over a star emanating a diffuse aureole of light, a spider's web over a cloud crisscrossed by telegraph wires, falling autumn leaves over a profusion of flapping birds' wings. When reading these metaphors, the reader is made aware of how the apparent dissimilarity of the paired entities is overpowered by their visual likeness.[91]

In further analyzing the work of the Chilean poet, Cansinos Assens articulates the role that superimposition plays in this form of metaphor: "Cuando Huidobro, hablando de un espejo, dice: 'es un estanque verde en la muralla—y en medio duerme tu desnudez anclada' (*El espejo de agua*, 1915), la imagen contenida en el último verso nos da la sensación simultánea y doble de un navío en reposo y un cuerpo de mujer. […] Imágenes de esta índole sólo se encuentran, tan perfectas, en el arte nuevo" (76). As in the examples cited above, this metaphor functions by

[91] The metaphors and "double images" of avant-garde poetry, such as those by Huidobro that Cansinos Assens cites, combine dissimilar, seemingly incomparable entities into a single image that underlines their visual similarity. While the overall effect of such an image is that of homogeneity, the differences separating the compared entities have not disappeared: they remain present but vanquished, shown to be less significant than the aesthetic correspondence that places the entities in a relationship of equivalence. In other words, the reader remains aware of the categorical distinctions between the beings and things that form the metaphor, but the effect of the metaphor is to make these distinctions seem insubstantial and irrelevant. Ortega addresses this aspect of metaphor in "La deshumanización del arte" when he declares that, as the new art effectuates a "triumph over the human," "es preciso concretar la victoria y presentar en cada caso la víctima estrangulada" (366). The "strangled victim" in the case of these metaphors is the subjectivist belief that the compared entities are patently unequal, the conception of the human as something fundamentally different from the non-human.

layering the image of a sleeping, naked woman whose body is reflected in a mirror over the image of a boat anchored in the middle of a calm pond. As Cansinos Assens points out, the role of metaphor is this example is to present both images simultaneously, so that the sleeping woman appears to morph into the anchored ship and the mirror into the still water of the pond.

The metaphors described by Cansinos Assens utilize the perspective of the modern painter in Ortega's allegory of the dying man. By uniting people, animals, technological objects and natural elements on the basis of their similar silhouettes or forms of movement, these examples demonstrate metaphor's capacity to realize the vision of the artist who "attends only to the exterior" of any given entity. Like Ortega and de Torre, Cansinos Assens uses the concept of "thaumaturgy" to convey the creative powers of metaphor: "Cada imagen de las mencionadas es una taumaturgia, está creada por el anhelo de un dios. El poeta moderno se afirma divino, creador. […] En su mundo imaginativo y libérrimo, de seres y cosas arbitrarias, la telurgia reina en todo instante" (77).[92] The avant-garde poet, who employs metaphor in service of a dehumanized form of art, resembles a god or magician because the world from which he creates his poetry is "libérrimo": intensely free, devoid of rules. In the poet's world, the boundaries dividing the animate and the inanimate, the natural and the manmade, subjects and objects have dissolved into nothing. The "beings and things" from which he crafts his metaphors present themselves to him in "arbitrary" order, not arranged by traditional categorizations and

[92] In affirming the god-like character of the modern poet and exalting the poetic image that has no precedent in the real world, Cansinos Assens articulates the principles underlying Huidobro's *creacionismo* movement. This movement was heavily influenced by the ideas of Guillaume Apollinaire and Pierre Reverdy, both of whom promoted artistic imagery that constituted creation rather than reflection of reality. In *The Cubist Painters: Aesthetic Meditations* (1913), Apollinaire emphasizes the modern painter's necessity of seeing himself as a god endowed with powers of genesis: "Above all, the painter must contemplate his own divinity" (10); "Only photographers manufacture duplicates of nature" (11); "Cubism differs from the old schools of painting in that it aims, not at an art of imitation, but at an art of conception, which tends to rise to the height of creation" (17). Similarly, in a 1918 article, Reverdy characterizes the modern poetic image as that which brings together previously connected entities: "The image is a pure creation of the mind. It is not born from a comparison but from a juxtaposition of two more or less distant realities. The more distant and true the relationship between the two realities, the stronger the image will be. […] One can create […] a powerful image, new to the mind, by bringing together two distant realities whose relationship the mind alone has grasped" (qtd. in Williams, *Figures of Desire*, 3).

hierarchies. For the poet, the only relevant aspect of these beings and things is their visual information, the "lights, shadows and chromatic values" that constitute the painter's experience of the dying man. Theorizers of the avant-garde such as Ortega, de Torre and Cansinos Assens identify metaphor as the central instrument with which the modern artist achieves this "libérrimo"—or leveled—vision of the world.

II. "The Dissolve is Unity in Diversity": Filmic Superimposition as Visual Metaphor

In 1931, Benjamín Jarnés declared, "Es hoy cuando el arte, con su cinemático microscopio, puede obrar verdaderos milagros" (123); thanks to the advances of film, "han crecido la posibilidades de creación" (124). Jarnés's celebration of film as a force that augments the godlike creative powers of the artist is indicative of the applicability of the cinema to Ortega's thaumaturgical conception of metaphor. The attraction of Ortega and likeminded avant-garde poets to metaphor centered on the technique's ability to effect the transformation of the human into the nonhuman by merging together entities that were different in category but similar in appearance. In the early years of film, one cinematic technique held particular appeal for artists and theorists who shared Ortega's drive toward dehumanized art: the use of dissolve to depict one thing or person changing smoothly into another. Filmmakers such as Buñuel and Dalí, as well as those observing and commentating on the cinema, saw in the dissolve the same possibilities for achieving dehumanization that metaphor held for avant-garde poets. By joining together entities whose shared outlines and forms of movement are made obvious to the viewer, the dissolve accomplishes a more vivid and totalizing homogenization of the depicted entities than any verbal metaphor could achieve. Just as poets of the avant-garde considered their own metaphors to create more daring, unusual pairings than those of traditional poetry, the thrill of

the dissolve for avant-garde filmmakers lay in its ability to combine—and equalize—provocatively disparate entities.

In an essay extolling the new art form of film, de Torre makes explicit the points of contact between the cinema and his own avant-garde poetry: "Elemento afín y generador, a veces, de la poesía novísima es el Cinema: Entre ambos hay una corriente osmósica de influencias y sugestiones" ("Cinegrafía" 386). The overlap between the two art forms centers on the attraction of both to the juxtaposition or fusion of multiple images. De Torre communicates the affinity between modern poetry and film by describing cinematic chains of images as "visual metaphors": "En algunos films las imágenes se precipitan enlazadas en rápidas proyecciones; otras, por su multiplicidad y celeridad, dan como precipitado óptico bellas metáforas visuales. Y a medida que aumente la celeridad expresiva del film, adquirirán más relieve las metáforas y los acordes fotogénicos" (388). The "multiplicity and speed" that characterize the cinema's manner of alternating among different images yield superimpositions that resemble the metaphors of de Torre and his peers, or a musical chord in which various notes are played at once. A central feature of both the new poetry and early explorations of film is their use of layered, simultaneous images: "Y he ahí otro punto de contacto del cinema con la novísima lírica: su velocidad y la superposición ilusoria de planos que engendra, parecidos al simultaneismo visual del poema elíptico" (388). De Torre saw a natural correspondence between the metaphors or "double images" of modern poetry and the "illusory superimposition of shots" that could be observed in the work of avant-garde filmmakers.

De Torre was not the first to observe an analogy between metaphor and cinematic superimposition. After all, Bousoño's definition of metaphor as "[el resultado] de entreverar o suponer dos planos" perfectly describes the process of linking two cinematic images together

through the dissolve so that they briefly appear simultaneously. In 1921, Jean Epstein presented "visual metaphors" as an inherent element of film, declaring, "Mr. Abel Gance was the first to create visual metaphors. […] The principle of the visual metaphor is adaptable in dreams and normal life; on the screen, it is a fixed given" ("La Poésie" 274). Epstein illustrates his conception of the cinematic metaphor by describing an imaginary film sequence in which the dissolve is employed so that the onscreen image changes smoothly into another, visually similar image:

> On screen, a crowd. A car pushes its way slowly through. Ovation. Hats off.
> White splashes of hands and handkerchiefs dance above heads. An indisputable analogy recalls these lines by Apollinaire:
> 'When human hands were all in leaf'
> and these others:
> 'The sky was filled with lakes of light.
> And human hands flew up like milk-white birds.'
> I immediately imagine a superimposition that emerges from the fade-in, then jumps into focus and stops abruptly:
> dead leaves falling down and swirling, then a flock of birds. (274–275)

In the Apollinaire metaphors cited by Epstein, the nexus connecting human hands to leaves and birds is the similarity of their color, shape and movement: a mass of waving pale hands resembles an abundance of leaves fluttering in the wind, or a flock of white birds whose wings flap ceaselessly. As Epstein points out, film is perfectly suited to representing this aesthetic correspondence. By dissolving the image of the applauding crowd into that of the falling leaves and then dissolving this image into that of the birds, the filmmaker replicates the function of metaphor in Apollinaire's poetry.

Epstein predicted that the visual metaphors he describes above would become the basis for films of the future: "Within five years we will write cinematographic poems: 150 meters of film with a string of 100 images that minds will follow" (275). Richard Abel, commenting on Epstein's concept of the "film poem," notes that in this form of film, "representational images

would be linked together, not through *sequentiality*, but through *simultaneity*, so that their suggestive, connotative, or metaphorical significance would be foregrounded" ("*Cinégrafie*" 213). The emphasis Abel places on the images' simultaneity is indicative of the centrality of the dissolve to a cinematic version of metaphor. In the same way that, as Cansinos Assens observes, a metaphor of Huidobro's "nos da la sensación simultánea y doble" of two entities, the simultaneity of the dissolve is the primary means by which a filmmaker creates an onscreen metaphor. While Huidobro's metaphors evoke simultaneity but are ultimately tethered to the inherent sequentiality of language, the dissolve enables the artist to literally present two images at the same time, so that their visual similarity is conspicuous.

When the images merged by the dissolve present radically disparate entities, especially the human and the nonhuman, the cinematic "visual metaphor" serves the cause of Orteguian dehumanization. One example of this can be found in Buñuel and Dalí's 1929 *Un chien andalou*. This seventeen-minute film, with its unending stream of disturbing and illogical images, was both highly provocative at the moment of its release and remains a polemical text that continues to generate conflicting critical readings. Much criticism of the film has identified how its departure from traditional narrative and representational modes serves to challenge and degrade conventional, bourgeois ways of thinking: logic and rationality, static gender roles, romantic notions of sex, and the authority of the church and police.[93] While the film's defiance of these concepts is unquestionably significant, the most radical challenge that it poses to traditional modes of thought lies not in the *content* of its images but in the way in which it restructures the relationship between the film image and the viewer's perception. Buñuel and Dalí continually thwart the viewer's expectations for the treatment of a human character. As Elza Adamowicz

[93] See, for example, Gwynne Edwards's *A Companion to Luis Buñuel* (2005), which extensively analyzes *Un chien andalou* as an illustration of Buñuel's impulse toward aggressivity and his interest in shocking the public, his sexual anxiety and association of sex with death, and his hatred of the church and other bourgeois figures of authority.

points out, the film's human figures are nameless and are characterized by "inconsistent behaviour," "uncertain identities" and "instability and randomness" (33); the film departs quite obviously and deliberately from the traditional use of human protagonists as anchors for the viewer's identification. Adamowicz notes that "as a consequence of the tenuous psychological substance of the characters, interest is constantly displaced to the dramatic function and physical presence of objects" (34). Indeed, the figuration of the human characters as object-like—devoid of stable personality features and seemingly indifferent to the repeated removal and grotesque transformation of their body parts—serves to close the wide gulf that normally exists in art between the human beings and the objects that surround them. The viewer of *Un chien andalou* is conditioned throughout the film to cease perceiving the onscreen human figures as fellow subjects with inner worlds of thoughts and emotions similar to the viewer's own. The dissolve, which features heavily in the film, aids the goal of placing subjects and objects on the same level by training the viewer to experience each onscreen entity as nothing more than an amalgamation of lines and shadows, easily rearrangeable into any other configuration of aesthetic values.

The most prominent instance of dissolve in *Un chien andalou* begins with the male protagonist staring intently at his right palm, which is pierced by a hole out of which streams a swarm of ants. A close-up of the hand draws the viewer's attention to the dark hole with its irregular edges that seem to pulsate with the movement of the ants. The image dissolves into another close-up of a woman's hairy armpit, and the two shots are aligned so that the ragged hole is substituted by the dark tangle of hair. The armpit remains onscreen for a few seconds before dissolving into the image of a sea urchin, which is situated in the same place in the frame (slightly to the lower left of center) as the armpit. As the sea urchin slowly dissolves, it is replaced, and briefly overlapped, by a bird's eye shot of an androgynous woman who pokes

tranquilly at an amputated hand while a frenzied crowd struggles to get near her. Later in the scene, the camera returns to an aerial view to show the crowd of onlookers dispersing around the woman. The viewer is struck by the similarity in silhouette and movement between this image—which shows the immobile figure of the woman surrounded by the jerky movements of the onlookers as they jostle one another and depart in different directions—and the initial image of the motionless hole encircled by the chaotically crawling ants.

This sequence employs the dissolve in order to connect fundamentally different types of beings: body parts, an animal with the inert qualities of a vegetable, a crowd of people. The entities depicted in the sequence are patently unrelated to one another: in the world outside of the film, they are not contiguous, and they share no profound qualities. There are no "inner" characteristics linking the hairy armpit to the sea urchin, or the sea urchin to the frenzied crowd. As Linda Williams observes, the connections between the images in the sequence "do not seem to be based on any semantic features, but […] on a purely formal similarity of shapes" ("Dream rhetoric" 97). Indeed, the sole factor uniting these beings and things is a general resemblance in their form—a dark, spiky mass—or, in the case of the first and last images in the sequence, a similarity of movement. The sequence is provocative because the use of the dissolve to transition from one entity to another unambiguously situates them in a relationship of equivalence. In spite of their differences in category, the film suggests, these entities are essentially interchangeable because they present similar images to the eye of the viewer.

At other moments in the film, the dissolve accomplishes Ortega's "fuga de lo humano" by transforming body parts into abstract, object-like things that have no connection to the subjectivity of their owner. In one sequence, a shot of the male character (Pierre Batcheff) caressing the clothed breasts of the female character (Simone Mareuil) dissolves into a shot of

him touching her naked breasts, then to one of him stroking her nude buttocks. As in the previously discussed sequence, it is the visual similarity between breasts and buttocks that enables this transition, and the dissolve implies the interchangeability of the two body parts. Later in the film, Batcheff draws his hand away from his mouth, and we see that his mouth has been erased. The dissolve replaces the vanished mouth with a clump of dark hair resembling the armpit hair of Mareuil, which has suddenly disappeared and presumably been transferred to Batcheff's face. Adamowicz asserts that the use of the dissolve in these scenes serves to deny the characters any stable identity and prevent the viewer from identifying with them: Batcheff's "sexual identity is unfixed when he exchanges body parts with Mareuil; the limits of his body are dissolved when ants swarm out of a hole in his hand, his mouth is erased, and his face is invaded by female body hair" (33). By isolating body parts from their context and pairing them with other entities, the film encourages the viewer to contemplate the body parts no differently from the objects that surround Batcheff and Mareuil. The purpose of the dissolve is to facilitate the reduction of the people and things in the film to the visual information contained in their surfaces, and to impede any consideration of their internal, non-visible characteristics.

The most famous sequence of *Un chien andalou* makes use of the same technique as the dissolve by juxtaposing highly disparate but aesthetically similar images. This sequence, of course, is that in which Buñuel slices Mareuil's eye with a razor, and then a thin cloud bisects a full moon. José Lahuerta identifies this series of images as a visual metaphor: "Un hombre con una navaja en la mano se dispone a cortar el ojo de una muchacha. Al público se le hace un nudo en la garganta. La imagen cambia, y se ve la luna atravesada por una afilada nube. El público respira aliviado: ha visto una metáfora" (109). The sequence is indeed metaphoric, because it uses aesthetic correspondence to bring together entities that are isolated from each other in

regular life. As Lahuerta observes, the function of metaphor in this case is to draw the viewer's attention away from the inner suffering of Mareuil—the "lump in the throat" that the image initially provokes in the viewer by causing him to identify with Mareuil's pain—and toward the aesthetic surface of the scene. The razor-eye/cloud-moon sequence places side-by-side two images, one depicting extreme human agony through mutilation, and the other involving only inanimate elements of nature. By juxtaposing these images in such a way that the viewer cannot help but focus on their visual similarity, the film instructs the viewer to experience the sequence as a simple play of images. The posture that the viewer is encouraged to adopt toward the slicing of the eye recalls Ortega's description of the modern painter witnessing the dying man: "El doloroso sentido interno del hecho queda fuera de su percepción. Sólo atiende a lo exterior, a las luces y sombras, a los valores cromáticos" (362).[94]

Both Dalí's and Buñuel's work in the years leading up to *Un chien andalou* evince an attraction to the artistic effect produced by the cinematic dissolve. In their pre-film visual art and literature, one can observe several instances of the techniques the dissolve would later encompass: superimposition, simultaneity of images and smooth transformations from one type of being to another.[95] The presence of these techniques in these artists' early work suggests that the dissolve represented for them the possibility of more vividly realizing an artistic impulse they

[94] The introductory sequence of *Un chien andalou* also serves the goals of *deshumanización* by diverging from the human-centric point of view that is typical to most artworks. Williams points out that metaphor traditionally functions by beginning with a human image and employing an image from nature as the second term in the metaphor, the purpose of which is to deepen the reader's or viewer's understanding of the initial term. In Buñuel and Dalí's film, this order is inverted: "Here it is precisely the element that usually appears to be the artificial or consciously constructed part of the figure—the 'background' moon and clouds which would in a more typical metaphor function to comment upon or embellish the diegesis—that occupies the active diegetic position of the metaphor, while what we would expect to be the more dominant diegetic element—the cutting of a human eye—functions as the embellishing commentary of the figure" ("Dream rhetoric" 94). The fact that the human drama in this sequence succeeds rather than precedes the inhuman images suggests that the inanimate objects in the scene hold greater importance than the human characters; the mutilation of the eye seems to exist only to complement the more significant figures of the moon and cloud.

[95] For further reading on the connections between Dalí and Buñuel's cinematic work and their pre-film literature, see Agustín Sánchez Vidal's commentary in *Luis Buñuel: Obra literaria* (1982) and Antonio Monegal's *Luis Buñuel de la literatura al cine: Una poética del objeto* (1993).

already possessed. In Dalí's pre-film work, the clearest evidence of this impulse is a passage from his short prose piece "La meva amiga i la platja," published in *L'amic de les arts* in November 1927:

> Un matí, vaig pintar amb *ripolin* un nen tot just nascut, i vaig deixar-lo assecar en el camp de tennis. Al cap de dos dies el vaig trobar eriçat de formigues que el feien moure amb el ritme anestesiat i silenciós de les garotes. Tot seguit vaig adonar-me, però, que el nen tot just nascut no era altra cosa que la sina rosa de la meva amiga, menjada frenèticament per l'espessor metàl·lica i brillant de les agulles del fonògraf. Però, no era tampoc la sina d'ella: eren els trossets del meu paper de fumar, agrupats nerviosament a l'entorn del topaci imantat de l'anell de la meva promesa. (104)

This passage is strikingly similar to the hand-armpit-sea urchin-crowd sequence of *Un chien andalou*. Dalí describes a bizarre, heterogeneous assortment of entities: a painting of a newborn baby covered in crawling ants, his lover's breast "eaten" by phonograph needles, the topaz stone of her engagement ring surrounded by his shredded cigarette papers. The obvious unifying factor is that each consists of a vaguely round, pinkish-yellow form—the baby, the breast and the topaz—covered in small, spiky things: ants, phonograph needles and scraps of paper. As in the film, the similarity in shape and color among these entities is presented as relevant, while their differences in category (and size) are not. Yet the most significant way in which this passage anticipates the dissolves of *Un chien andalou* is Dalí's attempt to depict the images *simultaneously*. The phrases "vaig adonar-me" and "no era tampoc" suggest to the reader that, as the narrator contemplates the image of the ant-covered painting, the images of the lover's breast and the engagement ring are also present. This simultaneity allows one entity to morph seamlessly into the next, so that rather than each image cleanly replacing the previous one, they are layered together to create a double image.

Arthur Terry points out that "La meva amiga i la platja" owes "a great deal to the prose poems of Dalí's friend, the poet J.V. Foix" (213). Indeed, Dalí's text resembles Foix's work in

its endeavor to present various entities simultaneously, creating an image of the world in which each thing is not stable but constantly metamorphosing. An excerpt from Foix's prose poem "Diari 1918," published in *L'amic de les arts* in November 1926, is particularly illustrative of the precedent Foix's work constitutes for Dalí:

> En percebre de lluny mon rival que m'esperava, immòbil, a la platja, he dubtat si era ell o el meu cavall o Gertrudi. En acostar-m'hi m'he adonat que era un fal·lus de pedra, gegantí, erigit en edats pretèrites. Cobria amb la seva ombra mitja mar i duia gravat al sòcol una llegenda indesxifrable. M'he acotat per a copiar-la, però al meu davant, badat en ple sorral ardent, hi havia únicament el meu paraigua. (7)

Like "La meva amiga," this text depicts a series of transformations among disparate beings and things: the figure on the beach begins as Foix's enemy, then becomes his horse (a symbol of the poet's ego), then his lover (Gertrudi), then a giant, ancient stone phallus, and finally the poet's umbrella standing upright in the sand.[96] Foix's "he dubtat" and "m'he adonat," which serve to convey the figure's simultaneous existence as each of the different forms and suggest its potential to continue transforming indefinitely, would be echoed the following year in Dalí's "vaig adonar-me" and "no era tampoc." These phrases attempt to overcome the sequentiality of language by evoking superimposition and smooth, seamless transformations—a effect that would eventually be fully actualized in the chains of dissolving images in *Un chien andalou*.[97]

[96] Foix's poem also shares with Dalí's text a bizarre confusion among items of vastly different sizes: Foix's poetic speaker is unable to tell the difference between a horse, human figures, an enormous structure that "covered half the sea with its shadow" and an umbrella. This aspect of the technique employed by both writers is especially redolent of the dissolve, given that in film, the juxtaposition of images of large and small entities that take up the same space in the camera frame creates the illusion that they are the same size. In *Un chien andalou*, for example, the smooth transition from the sea urchin to the woman in the middle of the crowd induces the viewer to momentarily forget that the latter is several orders of magnitude larger than the former.

[97] Although the cinematic dissolve does allow the filmmaker to briefly present multiple images at the same time, the viewer of films like *Un chien andalou* will note that this technique does not offer the possibility of fully escaping the sequentiality of language. The hand-armpit-sea urchin-crowd sequence of Buñuel and Dalí's film does achieve the seamless transformations for which texts like "La meva amiga" and "Diari 1918" strive, demonstrating why this technique represented such an exciting new tool for the avant-garde artist. At the same time, the insurmountable sequentiality of this chain of images—as the hand disappears to be replaced by the armpit, which is then followed by the sea urchin—suggests the fundamental kinship of the cinema with verbal language. The attraction of avant-garde artists to the dissolve in many ways centers on a frustration with the confines of language and a desire to circumvent these restrictions. The similarities and differences between verbal attempts at simultaneity (such as those by Dalí and

The literary technique that is on display in "La meva amiga" is evidence of what Dawn Adès terms Dalí's "lifelong fascination with morphology" (129). His biographer, Ian Gibson, describes this fascination as being rooted in the ever-shifting rocks at Cap Creus, the seaside area in Cadaqués where Dalí spent summers as a child:

> The cliffs and escarpments of Creus are composed of easily eroded mica-schist of slaty texture. Over the centuries the rains and the *tramuntana*, the latter laden with a corrosive cargo of sand and salt, have sculpted the mica-schist into weird shapes that, as one watches, no sooner assume the form of, say, a phantasmagoric bird or animal than they turn into a wrinkled human profile, a fairy palace or a clump of tropical vegetation. Creus is a vast natural theater of optical illusions, and from the prolonged contemplation of its metamorphoses was to come Dalí's obsession with the double image, one of the hallmarks of his mature art. (57)

The defining quality of Cap Creus's rocks, in Gibson's description, is their instability: each shape does not have a enduring identity, but rather could equally take the form of a person, animal, plant or abstract figure. Adès, who observes the presence of dissolve-like transformations in Dalí's paintings,[98] points out that this sense of ceaseless metamorphosis is what underlies his attraction to the double image. In the ambiguous, layered forms of Dalí's paintings, "the disturbance that is always felt when a shape, a face, even a word is momentarily misread, but normally evaporates when the 'real' object is correctly identified and is palpably there, remains. […] There is a kind of permanent instability in these images" (158–159). Adès's comment serves equally well to describe the multiple transformations of "La meva amiga." In this text, the point is not the final image in the sequence—the reader senses that the engagement ring encircled by shredded paper is no more "correct" than the previous images, and that this

Foix) and the cinematic dissolve illustrate the ways in which film both offers a thrilling alternative to verbal language and remains subject to some of the same constraints that limit verbal expression.

[98] "Paintings like *Honey Is Sweeter Than Blood* [1927], and especially *Little Ashes* [1928] do seem to be trying to achieve in paint effects more natural to the manipulative possibilities of the camera and photographic techniques: superimpositions, montage, fades and dissolves […]. In *Little Ashes*, for instance, the lumpen pink torso seems to be dissolving, metamorphosing, from one form to another" (142). Adès also notes that *The Great Masturbator* (1929) involves "extravagant morphological alterations, between flesh, stone, petal and hair" (149), and that his schematic drawing for *Invisible Sleeping Woman, Horse, Lion, etc.* (1930) "shows the process of transformation from reclining woman, through horse to lion" (157).

image could easily undergo further mutation—but the continual misreading and metamorphosis. In *Un chien andalou*, the dissolve is employed for the same purpose: to convey the lack of adherence of each image to a particular identity or category of being.

Prior to his excursion into filmmaking, Dalí celebrated the ability of the camera to unite disparate things on the basis of their shared forms. In "La fotografia, pura creació de l'esperit" (1927), he describes the "analogies" that the camera discovers between seemingly unrelated entities: "Un senzill canvi d'escala, motiva insòlites semblances, i existents—per bé que insomniades—analogies. Un clar retrat d'una orquídia, s'uneix líricament amb l'interior fotografiat de la boca d'un tigre" (91). Dalí imagines a photograph of an orchid, presumably a close-up shot in which the flower's petals and stamen splay outwards from its center, being juxtaposed with the image of a tiger's gaping mouth. The two images "lyrically unite," implying that superimposition is employed in order to merge them smoothly together. The analogy that this combination of images presents—the visual correspondence between the flower and the roaring mouth—is "undreamed of" because traditional art attributes opposite concepts to the two entities: the orchid represents beauty, purity, fragility, while the tiger's roar is a symbol of rage and violence. By ignoring these subjective, human associations and "attending only to the exterior" of each thing, the combination of photographs that Dalí describes exemplifies Ortega's idea of dehumanized art. Because the two images constitute an unprecedented pairing that places apparently antithetical entities—small and large, delicate and powerful, beautiful and ugly—on the same plane, the merged photographs provide a visual version of the radical avant-garde metaphors extolled by poets like de Torre.

Buñuel's literary work in the years before *Un chien andalou* displays the same interest in superimposition and transformation that can be observed in texts of Dalí's like "La meva amiga."

Several of the poems contained in his unpublished poetry collection *Un perro andaluz* (written in 1927) employ a literary version of the dissolves that would feature heavily in the film by the same name. "Me gustaría para mí," for example, consists of a series of images that alternate seamlessly between animate and inanimate entities:

> Lágrimas o sauce sobre la tierra
> de dientes de oro
> de dientes de polen
> como la boca de una muchacha
> de cuyos cabellos brotaba el río
> en cada gota un pececillo
> en cada pececillo un diente de oro
> en cada diente de oro una sonrisa de quince años,
> para que se reproduzcan las libélulas. (133)

This poem is an example of what Antonio Monegal identifies as a central technique of Buñuel's poetry: "un modelo de secuencia en el que se introducen elementos no equivalentes, para hacerlos aparecer como si lo fueran" (67). The poem presents elements of human beings transforming into elements of nature and back again: tears into a willow, gold teeth into clumps of pollen, a girl's hair into a river. The smooth, constant transformations among the entities combined with the emphasis on their aesthetic correspondence serves to, as Monegal observes, suggest an equivalence between the human and the non-human. The poem could well be represented cinematically by employing the dissolve to overlap the images of the paired entities, so that the viewer is left with an impression of their interchangeability.

Another poem from *Un perro andaluz* anticipates the dissolve in the same way as "La meva amiga," by using language that attempts to present images of disparate entities simultaneously. "Bacanal" describes the martyrdom of Saint Bartholomew with the following lines: "Al morir se lo comieron unas hormigas alegres / que tampoco eran hormigas / eran unas bayaderas silenciosas" (139). As in Dalí's prose text, the phrase "que tampoco eran hormigas"

suggests that the image of the Indian dancers is present at all times beneath the image of the ants. The text thus conjures a layered, fused vision of the two images that accentuates the visual similarity (while ignoring the extreme difference in size) between a mass of swarming ants and a throng of silent, energetic dancers. Buñuel's poetic technique of substituting human beings for small animals or elements of nature (and vice versa) serves to remove each entity from its real-life context and, consequently, its place in the subject-object hierarchy. As Monegal points out, the effect of this technique is an implied lack of differentiation among the beings and things contained in the poem: "El ser, incluso el ser vivo, es desprovisto de sus atributos diferenciadores, para ser manejado como una pieza más del rompecabezas" (68). Similarly, Agustín Sánchez Vidal notes of Buñuel's collage-like technique that "se trata de abolir el principio de contradicción, o, lo que es lo mismo, el de identidad" ("Apuntes" 61). The entities represented in Buñuel's poems are stripped of the qualities and associations that normally distinguish them from one another and grant each one a unique identity. In the world of his early poems, as in the later world of *Un chien andalou*, all beings and things are united by an implied sense of sameness.

In "Bacanal," the "silence" of the Indian dancers—"eran unas bayaderas silenciosas"—aids their equalization with the swarm of ants: since both the human characters and the insects in this sequence lack the ability to speak, it is easier to see them as occupying the same plane. Several early film theorists identified the collective silence of all onscreen entities, from human beings to inanimate objects, as a factor that contributed to their equality and interchangeability. In his 1927 essay "Del plano fotogénico," Buñuel alludes to this aspect of the cinema: "Silencioso como un paraíso, animista y vital como una religión, la mirada taumatúrgica del objetivo humaniza los seres y las cosas" (6). The silence of pre-sound film "animates" and

"humanizes" things by presenting them as equal to the human actors, who share the objects' muteness. De Torre, similarly, connects the homogenous silence of all onscreen entities to the sense that film grants life to inanimate objects: "El cinema […] debe expresar neta y plásticamente la vida en su milagrosa movilidad: Vida de las personas, de los paisajes, de los objetos: Ante el objetivo, envueltos en brumas de silencio, estos cobran una vida insospechada" ("Cinegrafía" 387). As Buñuel and de Torre suggest, the reduction of human beings to mute images minimizes their distinction from the things that surround them, which serves to elevate objects to the level of the human.

In *Visible Man* (1924), Béla Balázs expounds more explicitly on the idea to which Buñuel and de Torre allude. While in real life the capacity of human beings to speak makes them fundamentally different from inanimate objects, the universal silence of a filmic world greatly diminishes this difference:

> In the speaking world, silent objects are much more lifeless and insignificant than human beings. They acquire only a second- or third-grade life, and that only in rare moments of heightened sensitivity among the human beings who observe them. In the theater there is a difference of degree between human individuals, who speak, and things, which are silent. The two live in different dimensions. In film, however, this difference of degree vanishes; objects are not degraded or diminished in this way, but *share with human beings a quality of silence* that makes the two almost homogenous, and hence enhances the mute object's vitality and significance. (*Béla Balázs* 23)

Balázs would reiterate this concept in *Theory of the Film* (1948):

> On the stage the living, speaking human being has a far greater significance than dumb objects. They are not on the same plane and their intensity is different. In the silent film both man and object were equally pictures, photographs, their homogenous material was projected onto the same screen, in the same way as in a painting, where they are equally patches of colour and equally parts of the same composition. In significance, intensity and value men and things were thus brought onto the same plane. (58)

The contrast Balázs draws between theater and film illustrates the way in which the cinema disturbs the hierarchies of normal life. In a play—which, though it may be fictional, does not depart from the three-dimensional, multi-sensory reality of the real world—human actors exist on a higher plane than mere things. The ability of the former to express, through words, their thoughts and emotions makes obvious their categorical distinction from the latter, which do not speak because they have no inner world to disclose. In a silent film, as this difference in speaking ability vanishes, the spectator's awareness of the fundamental distinction between subjects and objects decreases.

Like Balázs, the poet Antonio Machado observed silent film's effect of equalizing people and things. On the movie screen, writes Machado,

> vemos claramente que la acción sin palabra, es decir, sin expresión de conciencia, es sólo movimiento, y que el movimiento no es, estéticamente nada. Ni siquiera expresión de la vida, porque lo vivo puede ser movido y cambiar de lugar lo mismo que lo inerte. El cine nos enseña cómo el hombre que entra por una chimenea, sale por un balcón y se zambulle después en un estanque, no tiene para nosotros más interés que una bola de billar rebotando en las bandas de una mesa. (qtd. in Buñuel, "Nuestros poetas y el cine" 177)

Though Buñuel cites Machado's comments only in order to mock the poet for his conservative suspicion of the cinema, the above passage is similar to Buñuel's suggestion that the camera appears to grant life to things by uniting people and objects under a shared condition of silence. Machado points out that in a film, where human beings are deprived of "expression of consciousness," the intentional actions of a subject and the passive movements of an object are made equal in the eyes of a spectator: a man who dives with agency into a pond and a billiard ball that traverses the table because it is pushed by a cue are both perceived simply as images that move.[99] In silent film, as Balázs states, "both man and object were equally pictures, […]

[99] Machado's description of the equality that exists between subjects and objects in film recalls Dalí's 1928 essay "Joan Miró" (discussed in Chapter One). In that essay, Dalí presents the image of a horse-drawn cart equipped with

equally patches of colour." These artists' and theorists' observations that every entity in a film shares the same existence as an *image* illustrate the inherent relevance of film to Ortega's concept of dehumanization. Just as Ortega's modern painter experiences every person and thing before him as a collection of "luces y sombras" and "valores cromáticos," disregarding the inner world (or lack thereof) of each entity, film transforms each human being, animal and inanimate object into an image to be contemplated. As Jarnés states of film, "Se ha roto la distancia entre lo grande y lo pequeño de los seres. El cinema destruye todo prejuicio de arcaica relatividad y se complace en nivelarlo todo" (124).

If the medium of silent film in general realizes Ortega's vision for dehumanized art by placing the human and the non-human on the same plane, the avant-garde form of metaphor promoted by Ortega, de Torre and other writers finds expression in film's capacity for juxtaposing entities that have no connection in regular life. In a 1916 article, the French film critic Emile Vuillermoz describes this power of the cinema to create unprecedented combinations of images:

> Here I touch on one of the most marvelous technical possibilities of cinema art. This ability to juxtapose, within several seconds, on the same luminous screen, images which generally are isolated in time or space, this power (hitherto reserved to the human imagination) to leap from one end of the universe to the other, to draw together antipodes, to interweave thoughts far removed from one another, to compose, as one fancies, a ceaselessly changing mosaic out of millions of scattered facets of the tangible world… all this could permit a poet to realize his most ambitious dreams—if poets would become interested in the cinema, and the cinema would interest itself in poets! (131)

a sail and describes a mode of perceiving the scene that uses motion and stillness as the only means of separating animate beings from inanimate ones: he considers "la vela del carro i les cordes mogudes pel vent com a part viva i palpitant del conjunt, puix que realment són les úniques que es belluguen davant dels nostres ulls, i, per contra, el cavall quiet com a continuació inanimada, inerta, de les rodes i de la fusta" (202). This mode of vision is an example of Dalí's ideal of "objective reality," which he saw the camera as uniquely capable of accessing. In this way, both Dalí and Machado allude to the idea that in film and photography, the "inner" reality of the beings and things captured by the camera—whether or not they act with agency—is irrelevant; only visible characteristics that are detectable from the outside, such as movement, are a relevant means of classifying the figures that populate the movie screen.

Vuillermoz anticipates de Torre's declaration of the inherent fraternity between film and modern poetry. His description of film's ability to unite entities that "are isolated in time or space" and to "draw together antipodes" resembles de Torre's assertion that modern metaphor "no debe limitarse tímidamente a asir aspectos conocidos y relaciones previstas de las cosas" ("La imagen" 300) but should discover likenesses between things usually considered too different to merit comparison. Francisco Ayala, in his 1929 book on the cinema, echoes Vuillermoz's characterization of film as a "mosaic" that ignores conventional notions of affinity:

> El creador [de cine] se mueve, sin otra guía que su intuición estética, en un orbe de cosas, de sensaciones, de ideas que se presenta revuelto y ajerarquizado a los ojos de su alma. Allí habrá de elegir —nótese el alto significado de la palabra— las piezas necesarias para formar sus máquinas —perfectamente inútiles y sin correspondencia en la ordenación natural del mundo—. Colocará un alba junto a un anochecer; un cabo suelto de música junto a un brazo femenino; la idea de una botella junto a la sensación de un perfume, hasta lograr un bello mosaico. (*Indagación* 25–26)

Ayala emphasizes the filmmaker's act of freely "choosing" the entities that will comprise his cinematic mosaics. In the same way that the avant-garde poet relies on no standard other than his imagination to determine the pairings of his metaphors—he disregards cultural ideas of classification and hierarchy—the filmmaker is free to join together beings and things that are traditionally thought of as incomparable. The filmmaker selects his images from a world that is "revuelto y ajerarquizado," recalling Cansinos Assens's description of the "mundo imaginativo y libérrimo, de seres y cosas arbitrarias" of the modern poet (77). For both the poet and the filmmaker with an inclination toward dehumanization, the world from which they create their works is populated by entities defined not by the category of being to which they pertain but by the aesthetic, exterior values that they present to the eyes of the artist.

Vuillermoz's and Ayala's comparison of film to a mosaic in which a diverse assortment of things exist in juxtaposition describes the technique of montage, a broad category that

encompasses the smooth transitions of the dissolve as well as clean cuts between discrete images. In his celebration of the innovative creative faculties of film, Ayala also specifically praises the dissolve for its ability to unite disparate things: "El cine consigue ese divino escamoteo que es la imagen, con limpieza única. Convierte —sin esfuerzo— una copa en una rosa de cristal. La rosa, en una mano; la mano, en un pájaro. O —como en un reciente *film* alemán— un frutero con dos manzanas en el pecho de una mujer" (32–33). Ayala's description of a sequence in which one entity "[se] convierte, sin esfuerzo" in another strongly evokes a chain of dissolves in the style of *Un chien andalou*. The "effortless" character of these transitions implies that the images are positioned in order to maximize their visual similarity, so that the general outline of the crystal rose aligns with that of the goblet, and the shape of the bird replaces that of the hand. As Ayala points out, the sense of transformation conveyed by the dissolve results in the disappearance ("escamoteo") of the original image—an effect of metaphor identified by Ortega: "La metáfora escamotea un objeto enmascarándolo con otro" (373). Indeed, Ayala's description of the dissolve illustrates Ortega's conception of metaphor as an instrument of dehumanization. The fluid transformation of a fruit bowl containing two apples into an isolated pair of breasts suggests an equalization of the two entities whose larger implication is the lack of significant difference between human beings and things. This example of the dissolve epitomizes the characterization of the technique offered by the critic Germaine Dulac in 1924: "The dissolve is unity in diversity" (312). Dulac's formulation pithily encapsulates the dissolve's function as a means of achieving homogeneity among heterogeneous images, leveling the discrepancy between subjects and objects into a parallel relationship between equivalent entities.

The dissolves of *Un chien andalou* fall into the category of what Balázs calls "montages based on the similarity of forms," noting as an example that the German director Walter

Ruttmann "once juxtaposed parallel gas pipes with women's slender legs" (*Béla Balázs* 130). Balázs describes this form of montage as that which combines images solely on the basis of their visual correspondence: "Curves paired with curves, undulation with undulation. Relationships on the level of content are not relevant here. At one point in his *General Line* Eisenstein cuts four times in a row between the close-up of a cricket and a mechanical harvester, simply because they share 'the same line'" (130). Elsewhere, Balázs describes montages in which images are juxtaposed in order to deepen the viewer's understanding of a character's inner experience. For example, he cites a D.W. Griffith film in which a woman's reputation is ruined by a campaign in the yellow press, and her feelings of vulnerability and helplessness are conveyed by a montage that alternates between images of newspapers cascading rapidly off the conveyor belt and shots of the woman's face as she lies defenselessly on the floor.[100] The contrast between this form of montage and that employed in the dissolve sequences of *Un chien andalou* (or in the Ruttmann and Eisenstein films cited by Balázs) elucidates the function of the latter technique. In montages based wholly on aesthetic similarity, as Balázs states, "relationships on the level of content" are irrelevant: the correspondence between the images does not serve to highlight the portrayed entities' shared inner characteristics or, in the case of an image of a human being, to convey the person's thoughts and emotions. Rather, this type of montage has the exact opposite effect: it instructs the viewer to focus his attention wholly on the surface-level aesthetic qualities of the entities in the sequence, and consequently to minimize his awareness of their non-visible aspects.

Balázs observes that the use of the dissolve to transition between two images has the effect of implying a profound kinship between the onscreen entities:

> Dissolves always point to a deeper relationship. If the image simply jumps from one face or object to another, the result is simply one more sequence. But, if there is a dissolve, we attribute to these people, these objects, some special mutual

[100] This sequence is described in Balázs's *The Spirit of Film* p. 126.

> relationship. The interpenetration of their images appears to us as a symbol of the inner interconnectedness of their nature, their inner meaning. (136)

This characterization of the dissolve is similar to that provided by Dulac: no matter how diverse and seemingly unrelated the images in a sequence, the technique of making one smoothly transform into the other suggests to the viewer that their relationship is one of unity and basic similarity. The dissolve functions almost as an equals sign, conveying the idea that the images on either side of it have the same value. Balázs's comments on the dissolve as well as his description of "montages based on the similarity of forms" are both relevant to the form of dissolve that features in Buñuel and Dalí's film. In the dissolve sequences of *Un chien andalou*, it is obvious that the only nexus connecting the images is the fact that they "share the same line"; the viewer knows that the beings and things onscreen have no significant inner qualities in common. At the same time, the dissolve inevitably causes the viewer to "attribute to these people, these objects, some special mutual relationship," to see them as essentially homogenous. The effect of the dissolve is to situate the merged entities on the same plane, while the viewer is simultaneously aware that the only relationship among the items in the sequence is their visual correspondence. The use of the dissolve in a montage based on the similarity of forms thus suggests to the viewer that the entities in the sequence are equivalent *because of* their shared lines. Their "interconnectedness," or uniformity of value, is a product not of an affinity in their inner characteristics—the presence or absence of the ability to think, feel or act with agency—but of their aesthetic similarity.

III. From Maximum Contrast to Maximum Homogeneity in the *Greguerías*

Many critics have observed the presence of techniques typical of Ramón Gómez de la Serna's *greguerías* in Buñuel's early literary work as well as his films; as Gayle Roof notes, "There is little argument about the existence of a strong ramonian influence on Buñuel's artistic

production" (354). This influence centers on Gómez de la Serna's penchant for defying the tradition of affording the human being a privileged place at the center of an artwork. The hallmark of his work is the presence of objects that serve as protagonists and enjoy human capacities for emotion and agency. Buñuel's pre-film literature, which mirrors Gómez de la Serna's technique of reversing the typical roles of people and things, makes evident "the two writers' level of intellectual compenetration on the issue of object anthropomorphization" (Roof 358). Sánchez Vidal affirms that in Buñuel's poetry and prose pieces, "asistimos al derribo del tabicado que separa los distintos planos de la realidad" ("Notas" 251), that is, the various categories of being that distinguish human beings from animals and objects: "El hombre siente que la distancia entre él y los objetos se acorta […]. Mientras él se objetualiza, las cosas pasan a tener un protagonismo inusitado" ("Apuntes" 52). Like Buñuel's early writing, in which objects are endowed with life and the human subject is given a minimal, background role,[101] the central characteristic of the *greguerías* is the rearranging of traditional hierarchies between the animate and the inanimate. As James Hoddie notes, two of the *greguería*'s primary functions are "aniquilando las jerarquías entre objetos y personas" and "borrando fronteras entre, y confundiendo, lo subjetivo y lo objetivo" (36).

In a general sense, Buñuel's first film bears the traces of the *greguerías* in its continual blurring of the lines between human beings and things. However, *Un chien andalou*

[101] Several of the short fiction pieces Buñuel composed in the early and mid-1920s display a conspicuously Ramonian style, involving playful personifications of everyday objects. "Tragedias inadvertidas como temas de un teatro novísimo" (1923) describes in detail the affections and sense of humor of a chamois cloth and the suicidal feelings of a set of pajamas. In "Una traición incalificable" (1922), the human narrator is surrounded by furniture, papers and elements of nature that exhibit a gamut of emotions as they interact with him and with one another. "Instrumentación" (1922) is particularly illustrative of the influence of Gómez de la Serna on Buñuel's work. This piece is comprised entirely of descriptions of musical instruments that, in their format as well as their attribution of personalities to inanimate objects, are indistinguishable from *greguerías*: "Violines: Señoritas cursis de la orquesta, insufribles y pedantes"; "Violas: Violines que llegaron ya a la menopausa. Estas solteronas conservan aún bien su voz de media tinta"; "Corno inglés: Es el oboe ya maduro, con experiencia. Ha viajado. Su exquisito temperamento se han tornado más grave, más genial" (87–88).

demonstrates that Buñuel and Gómez de la Serna are united not only in their shared interest in attacking the subject-object hierarchy but also in the specific means by which they realize this goal. Both *Un chien andalou* and the *greguerías* employ a form of metaphor that merges together two or more radically different entities and emphasizes their visual correspondence. Like the dissolves of Buñuel and Dalí's film, the *greguería* makes use of superimposition in order to place maximum emphasis on the aesthetic uniformity between disparate beings and things. The dissolve and the *greguería* are parallel techniques that both serve the objectives of Orteguian dehumanization by suggesting to the viewer or reader that apparently antithetical entities, such as human beings and objects, are essentially equivalent.

The *greguerías* are often summarized with the famous formula provided by Gómez de la Serna himself: "Humorismo + metáfora = greguería" (*Total de greguerías* 35). This formula indeed provides a useful means of understanding the genre, because it stresses the central role of metaphor in Gómez de la Serna's witty aphorisms. The *greguerías* constitute a form of metaphor in that they bring together entities that are not adjacent in regular life and—recalling Bousoño's definition of the trope—evoke the superimposition of one over the other. In the introduction to a 1935 collection of *greguerías*, Gómez de la Serna describes the conception of metaphor that underlies his genre: "La metáfora es después de todo la expresión de la relatividad. El hombre moderno es más oscilante que el de ningún otro siglo, y por eso más metafórico. Debe poner una cosa bajo la luz de otra. Lo ve todo reunido, yuxtapuesto, asociado" (*Flor de greguerías* 12). The *greguería* functions by observing one being or thing "under the light of another," so that the bottommost entity is seen in terms of its similarity with the entity above it. As Gómez de la Serna affirms, his work places emphasis on the shared qualities of seemingly dissimilar things: each being or object depicted in a *greguería* appears not as a discrete, individual entity with a

unique identity and clearly defined borders but "assembled, juxtaposed, associated" with other things.

The basic strategy of the *greguerías* is to describe one entity as another entity, so that the reader is presented with a double image in which two beings or things are merged together. Each of the following examples conjures two images simultaneously:

> La coliflor es un cerebro vegetal que nos comemos. (*Greguerías* 101)
> El tenedor es el peine de los tallarines. (116)
> El mar arrastra de los pelos al río. (262)
> El Nilo es el río de más hermosa y desmelenada cabellera. (74)
> Los helechos tienen hojas de ciempiés. (191)
> La jirafa es el periscopio para ver los horizontes del desierto. (155)
> El elefante es la enorme tetera del bosque. (187)

Obviously, in each case the nexus between the two images is their shared silhouette, color or texture: the bumpy, pale surface of the brain and cauliflower, the taut roundness of the teapot and the elephant's abdomen, the hairiness of the fern fronds and centipedes. These *greguerías* recall Huidobro's double images as described by Cansinos Assens, which layer together a spider web and intersecting telegraph wires or a mirror and a calm body of water. They also exemplify the type of metaphor that Borges, in a 1924 essay, calls "la imagen que aprovecha una coincidencia de formas." Borges illustrates this variety of metaphor with examples from literature: "Los pájaros remando con las alas. (Virgilio). La luna equiparada a un cero, a un girasol, a una jofaina, a un trompo, a una calavera, a un ovillo, a un semáforo, a una pantalla, a una moneda, a un globo, a un as de oros. (Lugones)" ("Examen de metáforas" 4). All of the examples cited by Borges could easily be represented as *greguerías* that superimpose an image of the moon with other round things. Indeed, the *greguería* "Luna: gran jofaina de la noche" (222) perfectly corresponds to this type of metaphor by using "a coincidence of forms" to evoke an unexpected equivalence between the ethereal, poetic moon and the lowly basin.

To return to the formula "humorismo + metáfora = greguería," the other element that comprises Gómez de la Serna's genre, apart from the metaphoric superimposition of visually alike entities, is the humorous character of the pairings. The comic aspect of the *greguerías* derives from the dramatic disparity of the two compared entities, from the reader's surprise at perceiving the similarity between seemingly incomparable things. As Richard L. Jackson notes, the *greguerías* are "characterized by a system of relationships between dissimilar elements which are so little related that pairing them produces a humorous twist" (296). Similarly, César Nicolás points out that the *greguerías* are provocative (and funny) because they disturb traditional concepts of similarity and difference: a central function of this genre is to "unir y reconciliar obsesiva y adánicamente lo que en nuestra educación 'histórica,' en nuestros hábitos literarios convencionales, y quizás en nuestra personalidad y cultura, aparece como desequilibrado y a veces radicalmente alienado o escindido" ("Imagen y estilo" 143). This description of the *greguerías*' penchant for "uniting and reconciling" entities that subjectivist tradition designates as opposites strongly recalls de Torre's description of modern metaphor. De Torre's avant-garde metaphors and Gómez de la Serna's *greguerías* have in common their act of rearranging standard categorizations in order to bring together, and implicitly equalize, radically different things.[102]

[102] In merging together comically different entities, creating an unexpected sense of sameness among what seems patently dissimilar, the *greguerías* bear a resemblance to the caricatures of the nineteenth-century French artist J. J. Grandville. (Juli Highfill also observes a similarity between Gómez de la Serna and one of Grandville's contemporaries: his alter ego, Tristán, was "a *flaneur* and dandy in the mold of Baudelaire" [*Modernism* 87].) Like Gómez de la Serna's work, Grandville's pictures frequently depict the confusion of the animate and the inanimate or the organic and the manmade, and they use physical resemblance as the basis for positing homogeneity. For example, Michele Hannoosh describes a Grandville caricature in which similarities of form enable the transformation of thing into person: in "Les métamorphoses du sommeil," a woman "emerges from a metamorphic process leading from bird, to bow and quiver, to spindle, to cup and ball game, to flower, to her human form" (41). Hannoosh notes that Grandville's pictures are "allegorical" as Walter Benjamin defines the term in *The Arcades Project*: they violate the "indivisible union of form and content" and follow the principle that "any person, any object, any relationship can mean absolutely anything else" (qtd. in Hannoosh 39). Benjamin considered these caricatures to embody the culture of capitalism, characterizing Grandville's works as "the sibylline works of publicity. Everything which in him exists in the form of a joke, of satire, reaches its true development as advertising" (qtd. in Hannoosh 45). Highfill points out that the *greguerías* similarly mimic advertisements and operate on the equivalence principle of capitalism: "Ramón's hyper-metaphoric activity amounts to a surrender to

A typical means by which the *greguería* achieves a comically unexpected pairing is to unite images of entities from different categories of being—what Nicolás calls the combination of "clasemas o rasgos semánticos inversos" (*Ramón y la greguería* 106). One form of this technique is the merging of animals and people:

> El que transporta el violón se parece a la hormiga cuando carga una brizna demasiado grande. (72)
> El ciclista y la bicicleta enredados en la caída parecen un insecto boca arriba. (147)
> El león está siempre a medio afeitar. (208)
> Los galgos son tuberculosos que corren. (213)
> La bufanda nos hace pájaros pechugones. (208)
> Los pardales están tan bufados el día del frío que parecen envueltos en bufandas y toquillas. (*Novísimas greguerías* 31)
> Los pájaros de pico largo parece que se están fumando el cigarro de su pico. (*Greguerías* 137)
> El bebedor con paja se va tornando pájaro, y hay un momento a últimos de verano en que ya lo es realmente. (137)

Alan Hoyle characterizes Gómez de la Serna's genre as "esta manía caprichosa de verlo todo […] metamorfoseado en otra cosa" (283–284). Indeed, each of the above *greguerías* suggests the transformation of an animal into a person or vice versa: the bassist and cyclist transform into insects, the lion into a human man with a half-shaven face, *galgo* dogs into emaciated tuberculosis patients. The last two pairs of *greguerías* exhibit Gómez de la Serna's penchant for portraying the same transformation—between a person wearing a scarf and a bird with puffed-up chest feathers, and between a bird with a long, thin beak and a person smoking a cigarette or drinking from a straw—in opposite directions. The focal point of these *greguerías* is not the animal or human image at which they ultimately arrive but the process of transformation itself as

the logic of exchange value and thus decisively connects his work to the booming, commercial culture of the 1920s" ("Metaphoric Commerce" 131). However, while Benjamin celebrated Grandville for subtly undermining and critiquing the commodification he imitated, he likely would not extend such praise to the *greguerías*. Summarizing Benjamin's argument, Hannoosh states, "In their dualism, Grandville's allegories have [an irony that takes] commodification to the extreme in order to expose and dismantle it" (49). The *greguerías* largely lack this irony: their humor is not a cynical one that serves to reveal the dark side of commodity culture, but a light and playful one that sincerely delights in this culture. As Highfill aptly argues, "Benjamin's 'Hell of the Same'"—the modern, capitalist world ruled by universal equivalence—"is Ramón's paradise" (123).

each entity crosses the boundaries of its category. Nicolás's comment that "la greguería convierte a Gómez de la Serna en un mago o taumaturgo" (100) illustrates both the centrality of godlike transformation to the *greguerías*' appeal and the points of contact between this genre, the cinematic dissolve and Ortega's concept of dehumanized metaphor.

As Ángel del Río observes, "Seres y cosas se confunden en el arte de Gómez de la Serna sin línea divisoria: lo humano se convierte en algo mecánico y lo inerte se nos muestra con los atributos de lo viviente" (236). A vast number of *greguerías* convey the essential sameness of human beings and things by layering together the images of a person and something inanimate. One subcategory of this type of *greguería* is the description of an element of nature as a human being: "Los viñedos aprietan los racimos contra su verde pecho como ocultando pudorosamente sus senos" (*Novísimas greguerías* 15); "En el algodón retoña la barba blanca de la experiencia de la tierra" (*Greguerías* 107); "El hielo se derrite porque llora de frío" (76). In each of these *greguerías,* a visual similarity between an inanimate natural element and the face or body of a person is used to attribute inner, subjective qualities or experiences—modesty, wisdom and the pain of being cold—to something inert and unfeeling. Other *greguerías* present manmade objects as people by highlighting their similarity of form with human body parts:

> La mandolina con su barriguita musical. (188)
> Los acordeones tienen el pelo ondulado. (204)
> Ese automóvil al que rellenan un neumático parece ser reanimado por medio de la respiración artificial. (*Novísimas greguerías* 18)
> La luna marcaba las venas de las carreteras. (165)
> Ese momento en que el tren se detiene antes de entrar en la ciudad se llama 'el parón' y lo señalan los abanicos de señales que se cierran nerviosamente y las vías que se desperezan cambiando su venosa dirección, descruzando sus piernas. (16)[103]

[103] A recurring theme in this variety of *greguería* is the association of objects with specifically female body parts by virtue of their visual similarity. Several entries in *Novísimas greguerías* (1929) overlap images of inanimate objects with those of breasts, pregnant bellies or female legs: "Las fresas con leche tienen un claro tipo de pecado. ¿Pezones lacteados?" (60); "Esas cortinas cortas de algunas puertas son como cortinas de puertas embarazadas" (61); "'Los broches de sus medias las sostenían como las pinzas sostienen los periódicos galantes prendidos al pentágrama

As del Río points out, the effect of these *greguerías* is to blur the dividing line between beings and things. They reflect their author's belief that objects are equally as equipped with agency and emotion as people, an idea that he articulated in the 1934 essay "Las cosas y el ello": "Es muy importante que hayamos comenzado a saber que hay vida incesante y sidérea en ese éxtasis de los objetos" (190). The above *greguerías* illustrate Gómez de la Serna's attitude toward the inanimate world by describing cars, highways, train tracks and musical instruments in terms of their similarity to human beings, so that they appear as not passive and insentient but pulsing with "incessant life." While these *greguerías* personify objects rather than objectifying people, their effect is not only to raise things to the level of the human but also, implicitly, to lower human beings to the level of objects. By placing the animate and the inanimate on the same plane, these *greguerías* communicate Gómez de la Serna's assertion that "lo más seguro es que seamos objetos" (191).

In a 1917 book, Cansinos Assens describes Gómez de la Serna's work as "una literatura que tiene la simultaneidad de una cinta cinematográfica." He points out, however, that unlike a film, the verbal art of literature is unable to literally present multiple images at the same time: "Pero las palabras no pueden proyectarse al mismo tiempo como las imágenes, sino que se coordinan sucesivamente […]. No pueden mostrársenos al mismo tiempo como se muestran las figuras de una danza. Nuestra atención es seria y no simultánea" ("Ramón Gómez de la Serna" 149). The *greguerías* respond to this limitation by attempting to emulate the simultaneity of a visual art, like film or dance, and thus transcend the sequentiality of language. Nicolás observes that one of the most common ways in which a *greguería* structures its image is through the

trefilado de los quioscos…' ¿O quizá más simplemente? 'Los broches del corsé sostenían las revistas ilustradas de sus medias'" (61); "Mirando aquellas preciosas piernas, pensé que eran estalactitas de la carne que habían necesitado siglos para caer tan bellamente así la una sobre la otra en tan esbelta languidez" (198).

formula "A es B," which generates "todo género de equivalencias" as the two entities in the *greguería* "quedan absorbidas íntegramente por una imagen metafórica" (54). Another common *greguería* format is the use of a colon to connect two images, as in "Luna: gran jofaina de la noche." This formula serves to reinforce "el efecto de simultaneidad y equivalencia: la imagen provoca […] una tensa igualación de los objetos" (56). The purpose of these structures is to present to the reader two entities at the same time, evoking their superimposition; Dalí, Foix and Buñuel make a similar attempt to create the illusion of superimposition in a literary text when they employ phrases like "vaig adonar-me," "he dubtat" and "tampoco eran" as the nexus between two images. As in the earlier cited texts, the effect of the *greguerías*' simultaneity is to imply that the entities on either side of the colon or the word "es" are essentially homogenous and equal in value. As Nicolás states, "La imagen greguerística formula casi siempre una equivalencia" (96).

By continuously suggesting equivalence between things that are normally separated by differences in category, the overall effect of a collection of *greguerías* is that of a leveled world in which traditional distinctions between beings and things are nullified. Juli Highfill's observation that the *greguería* "works to reweave the web of relations among things" ("Metaphoric Commerce" 119) accords with the definition of the genre that Gómez de la Serna himself provides in various texts. In the prologue to *Total de greguerías* (1955), he describes his work as the product of randomly rearranging elements and creating new pairings, so that standard categorizations and hierarchies are no longer perceptible: la *greguería* "nació aquel día en que cogí todos los ingredientes de mi laboratorio, frasco por frasco, y los mezclé" (21). This description presents the *greguería* in the same terms with which de Torre defines the avant-garde, dehumanized metaphor, which "baraj[a] arbitraria y divinamente los elementos cósmicos

y geográficos" ("La imagen" 318). Gómez de la Serna expresses a similar sentiment in the prologue to *Tristán* (1911), which Highfill identifies as "his earliest formulation of the *greguerías*" (124). In this text, the *greguería* is associated with his belief that what appears to be disparate is actually equivalent, and that the very concept of difference holds no meaning for him: "Hay que equivalerlo todo y apelmazarlo" (917); "Yo sé que el verde es azul y que una hora es igual a otra y que una rubia es igual a una morena, y que todo, aun lo más contradictorio es igual, perfectamente igual" (921). These formulations of the *greguería* illustrate how Dulac's definition of the cinematic dissolve as "unity in diversity" (312) is perfectly applicable to Gómez de la Serna's genre. Like the dissolve, the *greguería* starts with a contrast that is as dramatic as possible and ultimately yields a relationship of equivalence; the objective of both techniques is to convert heterogeneity into homogeneity.

The means by which the *greguería* achieves a disturbance of traditional hierarchies and an equalization of opposites is similar to the technique of Ortega's modern painter. The *greguerías* instruct the reader to rest his gaze on the aesthetic surface of a given entity and to limit his perception to what is strictly visible before him. Rodolfo Cardona, pointing out that the comparisons of the *greguerías* often rely on visual similarity, provides the following example: "'El cisne mete la cabeza debajo del agua para ver si hay ladrones debajo de la cama'. He aquí una yuxtaposición incongruente cuya justificación se encuentra en la asociación de movimientos afines" (14).[104] Cardona notes that the association between the swan and the child peeking under the bed is "una asociación puramente visual" (15) and that this type of analogy forms the basis of a large portion of *greguerías*: although Gómez de la Serna sometimes utilizes wordplay or makes

[104] The similarity of movement between the swan and the child that this *greguería* identifies is an affinity that Gómez de la Serna returns to in several instances as a means of equalizing people and animals: "Cuando el cisne sumerge en el agua cabeza y cuello, es como la mano de un brazo femenino que busca en el fondo del baño una sortija" (87); "El pulpo es la mano que busca el tesoro en el fondo del mar" (211).

comparisons of a more conceptual nature, "una de las formas más frecuentemente utilizadas en las greguerías es la del estímulo visual" (38). Like the painter in Ortega's essay, the perspective of many *greguerías* is that of someone who attends only "a lo exterior, a las luces y sombras, a los valores cromáticos" (362).

The relevance of the figure of the painter, whose exclusive attention to the dying man's visible surface prevents him from contemplating the man's inner pain, to Gómez de la Serna's work is especially evident in *greguerías* that superimpose an image of human suffering with that of an inanimate object. By bringing the reader's attention to the aesthetic similarity of the two images, these *greguerías* encourage the reader to experience a scene of illness, injury or death as a mere play of colors and textures: "La transfusión es como llenar la estilográfica" (95); "El queso Roquefort tiene gangrena" (96); "Todos los chorizos se ahorcan" (220). This last *greguería*, in particular, has an effect similar to that of the eye-slicing sequence of *Un chien andalou*. The image of a hanged person, whose grotesque violence inevitably causes a feeling of discomfort in the reader as he imagines the agony of a breaking neck, is neutralized by its juxtaposition with the visually similar image of a chorizo suspended from the ceiling. The absence of any inner experience in the chorizo image extends to the image of the hanged person, relieving the reader's uncomfortable identification with the person's pain and freeing him to focus only on the images' aesthetic aspects. Eugenio de Nora observes of the *greguerías*, "Todo se nivela, se iguala […]. La imagen aparece con la indiferencia de la que crearía una máquina que 'recordara' objetos afines por 'memoria' electrónica" (102). Indeed, the hallmark of the *greguerías* is their "indifference" to distinctions of category, such as that between subjects and objects. As de Nora points out, a robot or computer that has no concept of internal differences among beings and things—for example, whether or not a given entity is able to feel pain—but

can perceive similarities of shape and color would be capable of identifying the affinities in which many *greguerías* are based.

The dissolves of *Un chien andalou* and Gómez de la Serna's *greguerías* share the technique of emphasizing visual likeness over categorical difference in order to suggest the equalization of disparate things. Sánchez Vidal relates some lines from *La vida secreta de Salvador Dalí* in which Dalí, describing the scene in his first film in which two rotting donkeys appear atop a pair of pianos, mentions the visual similarity between the donkeys' teeth and the piano keys and between the pianos and coffins. Sánchez Vidal describes this passage as Dalí "desvelando, de paso, una de tantas greguerías presentes en el cine de Buñuel: el piano como ataúd y la dentatura del asno como teclado" ("Un chien andalou" 59). He notes that the *greguería*-like combinations of images in this film—such as the dissolve sequences linking the hand, armpit, sea urchin and crowd, or Mareuil's breasts and buttocks—place emphasis on their "carácter de libre asociación por encima del tiempo y el espacio" (63). Sánchez Vidal's comments identify two of the key factors that unite the *greguerías* and Buñuel and Dalí's film: the great distances in space, time and logic that separate the combined images, and the use of aesthetic correspondence to communicate the images' homogeneity. Because the film and Gómez de la Serna's writing employ essentially identical techniques, it is easy to adapt the dissolves of *Un chien andalou* to the medium of the *greguerías*, and vice versa. It takes little effort to imagine the *greguerías* represented cinematically as a chain of dissolving images. For example, "El tenedor es el peine de los tallarines" (116) and "El Nilo es el río de más hermosa y desmelenada cabellera" (74) would lose little of their original meaning if translated into three images—of a fork raking through long noodles, a long mane of hair traversed by a comb and a bird's eye view of a winding river—that briefly overlap one another so that each image appears

to smoothly transform into the one that follows. Similarly, the parallels between certain *greguerías* and the dissolves of *Un chien andalou* illustrate the analogy between the two techniques. The *greguería* "¡Qué duro le ha salido la barba al erizo!" (74) replicates nearly exactly the filmic sequence that overlaps the images of the hairy armpit and the sea urchin in order to foreground their visual likeness. The *greguería* "El sostén es el antifaz de los senos" (99) recalls Buñuel and Dalí's use of the dissolve to suggest the interchangeability of Mareuil's breasts and buttocks: in the film as well as this *greguería*, the effect of highlighting a visual similarity between two body parts is to imply the object-like character of the body parts and, by extension, of the person to whom they pertain.

* * *

The chain of dissolves in *Un chien andalou*, which ends arbitrarily with the image of the woman in the crowd but could—the viewer senses—continue indefinitely, is designed to convey the instability of identity in the world depicted in the film. Each onscreen entity seems poised to, at any moment, metamorphose into a different being or thing with a vaguely comparable silhouette. A *greguería* published in 1929 presents a similar vision of the world: "Vamos por la calle, y, de pronto, algo que mirábamos se convierte en otra cosa. Hay que tener un sistema nervioso muy flexible para soportar esas variaciones del reclamo moderno, que ahora es un paisaje, a poco es una señora y después es un niño llorón" (*Novísimas greguerías* 119). This *greguería*, which describes landscapes and people as so indistinguishable that one transforms effortlessly into the other and back again, summarizes the perspective that underlies Gómez de la Serna's genre. In the *greguerías*, as in the other texts this chapter has examined, a given entity exists only as the conjunction of aesthetic values it presents to the eye of the viewer or reader. This eye is one that remains always at a distance from the object it contemplates. Foix's prose

poem precedes its description of the dark shape on the beach shifting ceaselessly between human being, horse and man-made object with the phrase "En percebre de lluny" (7): it is the shape's remoteness from the speaker that enables its appearing to take on the form of many disparate things. The above *greguería* similarly makes use of an implicitly distant perspective in order to justify a disingenuous confusion among patently different entities. The literal distance that, in these texts, separates the speaker from the unstable, constantly transforming object he observes is representative of the figurative distance that always exists between the dehumanized artist and the world he contemplates.

The texts explored in this chapter illustrate Ortega's assertion "Ver es una acción a la distancia" (370), a statement that neatly summarizes the connection between experiencing a being only as an aesthetic object and remaining at a distance that precludes awareness of (and identification with) that being's inner, non-visible world. These texts accord with Ortega's concept of modern perception by depicting the world from the point of view of a purely visual form of consciousness. Significantly, the *greguería* cited above presents the perspective it describes—which is that of the *greguerías* as a whole—as the product of modernity: the continual transformations of the figure from landscape to woman to crying child are "esas variaciones del reclamo moderno." Nicolás asserts that the perspective Gómez de la Serna utilizes throughout his work is emblematic of a typically avant-garde way of seeing: the "peculiar modo de visión de la realidad en que descansa la greguería […] se convirtió, para los jóvenes del 27, en auténtico paradigma de lo *nuevo*" (7). This "modo de visión" is shared by the *greguería*, the camera and the modern painter in Ortega's allegory. It is a form of perception that, as Nicolás observes, can be identified as that of every avant-garde artist with an inclination

toward dehumanization: a perspective that levels the world by experiencing equally each being or thing as an image.

Conclusion

The texts examined over the course of this dissertation speak to the psychological impact that the technologies of film and photography had on Spaniards living during the 1920s and early 1930s, the period during which Spain launched rapidly into the world of industrialized, capitalist modernity. They depict the experience of existing among images that seemed endowed with inner worlds and agency, of navigating urban spaces in which real human beings intermingled with uncannily lifelike reproductions. By expressing—whether explicitly or implicitly—the idea that the omnipresence of photographic and filmic images altered one's sense of the fundamental distinction between subjects and objects, these texts demonstrate the immense power of the technological advancements of the early twentieth century. They show how the arrival of industrial modernity constituted an essential and irrevocable shift in a person's experience of the world: not only the presence of new conveniences, luxuries and forms of entertainment, but a transformation of the nature of reality and perception.

This dissertation follows one specific leitmotiv of the Spanish avant-garde—the phenomenon of the seemingly animate cinematic image and its consequence on human subjectivity—but in doing so, it touches on broader issues that motivate the art of this period. The reputation of the Spanish avant-garde reflects the name the period has been given: it is known for its vanguard attitude, its rejection of conventional artistic norms and its drive toward formal experimentation. Criticism of texts from this era thus often focuses on the works' avant-garde, or anti-tradition, characteristics and places less emphasis on the ideas the texts explore.

While the period can certainly be identified by its proclivity for artistic experimentation and novelty, it is also marked by its interest in articulating the import of the changes wrought by the first decades of the twentieth century. The Spanish avant-garde is replete with texts, both literary and theoretical, that ponder the nature of the innovations of their era: fashion, commodity culture, the urbanization of society, and technologies ranging from the cinema to the airplane to the electric light. By demonstrating the frequency with which texts from this period engage in profound and poignant ways with the question of how film interacts with subjectivity, this project illustrates the Spanish avant-garde's role as an arena for meditations on modernity.

The texts analyzed in this project document the psychological effect that photography and film had in one country during a specific time period. Due to Spain's belated and hurried modernization under Miguel Primo de Rivera in the 1920s, the advent of these technologies took place in Spain at a time when many other technologies—such as the telephone, the automobile and the gramophone—were also being made widely available. The popularization of photography and cinema occurred simultaneously with the major changes in lifestyle and worldview that the arrival of capitalist modernity, the explosion of the country's metropolises and the advent of a host of transformative new technologies were having on the Spanish populace. The unique historical conditions that form the background of the texts examined in this dissertation raise the question of how the impact of cinema differed in places that received film under disparate historical conditions. For example, did film have a similar effect on its viewers in countries that modernized in the nineteenth century, where photography was more widely used than in Spain for decades before the advent of cinema? Also, how does the experience of photography and film expressed in texts of the Spanish avant-garde compare to that in countries that modernized—giving their citizens regular access to the camera and its products—much later

in the twentieth century? This project would be well complemented by studies from other fields examining the relationship between subjectivity, objectivity and the cinematic image in literary texts from the periods during which film became popular in other countries.

This project also invites comparison with the effect that communications technologies developed after the invention of cinema have had on subjectivity and interpersonal relationships. Did the arrival of television in the 1950s similarly create the sense that the distinction between real human beings and their reproductions, between beings that think and feel and those that merely mimic the appearance of a subject, was being rendered nebulous? (Jeffrey Sconce's book *Haunted Media*, which examines the phenomenon of "electronic presence" during the age of television and is cited extensively in Chapter Three because of its relevance to Spanish avant-garde texts on the cinema, suggests that the answer is yes.) Perhaps even more relevant are the technologies popularized during the past two decades that have made photographic and cinematic images truly ubiquitous in daily life and have effected the substitution of images for people. Technologies such as digital cameras, camera phones and the current highly advanced iteration of smartphone cameras encourage the constant creation and editing of images of oneself, which are then made available to others via social media and online dating. Participation in these platforms entails interacting solely with images, while being under the illusion that one knows and engages with the real people that these images depict. Video communication through applications like Skype and FaceTime engenders the sensation that a faraway person is present and, again, operates by substituting a filmic reproduction for a human being. Students in my "The Spanish Avant-Garde and Technology" class (taught Winter 2019) were easily able to draw connections between the anxieties and emotions surrounding technology expressed in texts like

Francisco Ayala's "Polar, estrella" and "Cazador en el alba" and Pedro Salinas's "Far West" and "El teléfono" and their own experiences with technology in the twenty-first century.

The scope of this project is fairly narrow, as it is limited to the role that film plays in literary texts from Spain in the period of roughly 1923 to 1931. However, its implications—the effect that technologies that confuse real people and images have on a person's experience of his surroundings—are broad and can be applied to many other contexts that have experienced a rapid advancement in communications technology. I hope that this project is succeeded by others that investigate how the attribution of subjective qualities to images has the power to fundamentally alter the way in which human beings perceive and engage with one another.

Appendix

Image accompanying Dalí's "Non-Euclidean Psychology of a Photograph" (*Minotaure* 7, June 1935)

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